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FEMALE BIOGRAPHY;

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF

ILLUSTRIOUS AND CELEBRATED

WOMEN,

OF ALL AGES AND COUNTRIES.

Alphabetically arranged.

BY MARY HAYS.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS

OF

DISTINGUISHED WOMEN.

ELIZABETH BLAND.

ELIZABETH BLAND, remarkable for her knowledge of the Hebrew language, and her skill in Hebrew composition, deserves a place among women distinguished for their learning.

Elizabeth, the daughter of Robert Fisher of Longdore, was born about the period of the Restoration, in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Middlesex. In April, 1681, she married Mr. Nathaniel Bland, a linen-draper, in London, and afterwards, by his paternal inheritance, lord of the manor of Beeston, in the parish of Leeds, in the county of York, where he resided with his wife many years. Mrs. Bland bore six children, two of whom only, a son and a daughter, survived their

mother. Her daughter, Martha Bland, married Mr. George More, of Beeston.

Mrs. Bland studied the Hebrew language under the direction, and with the assistance, of lord Van Helmont, and became afterwards the instructress of her children. Among the curiosities of the Royal Society is preserved a phylactery * in Hebrew, written by this lady, of which Dr. Grew, in his account of rarities preserved at Gresham college (folio, London, 1681), has given the following description: "It is a single scroll of parchment, fifteen inches long, three quarters of an inch in breadth, with four sentences of the Law most curiously written upon it in Hebrew; viz. Exod. xiii. from verse 7 to 11, and from 13 to 17; Deut. vi. from verse 3 to 10, and xi. from 13 to 19. Serarius, from the rabbies, saith, that that they were written severally upon so many scrolls, and that the Jews do to this day wear them over their foreheads in their manner. So that they are of several sorts or modes, whereof this is one." Mrs. Bland having written the phylac-

* Their original use, as *mementos*, founded on Deut. lxviii.—"And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." They were afterwards worn ostentatiously, or as spells and amulets.

tery described by Dr. Grew, at the request of Mr. Thoresby, presented it to the Royal Society.

It appears by two pedigrees of the family, printed in Mr. Thoresby's "*Ducatus Leodiensis*," p. 209 and 587, that Mrs. Bland was living in 1712. Of her writings, which are believed to have been considerable, no account has been procured.

Ballard's Lives of British Ladies—Biographium Fœmineum.

BOADICEA.

AMONG women illustrious for courage and fortitude, the British Boadicea holds a distinguished place: the widow of Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, she found herself, by the imprudent testament of her husband, involved in the most cruel calamities. Prasutagus, with a view of procuring for his family the protection of the Romans, left the emperor co-heir, with his daughters, to his immense treasures. The Roman officers, whose extortions it was not easy to satisfy, availing themselves of a privilege so replete with mischief, practised on the unhappy queen and her family,

under pretence of being defrauded of their just claims, the most brutal outrages.

Boadicea, having assembled the Britons, reminded them, in a strain of pathetic eloquence, of the perfidy of the Romans, who, under fair promises, in exchanging for their own the laws and customs of the country, had exposed its natives to every species of calamity. Not satisfied with injustice and extortion, these barbarous oppressors, adding insult to cruelty, had dared to inflict on their queen (the chastity of whose daughters they had brutally violated), the indignity of corporeal punishment. If it must be confessed, that the Britons had been the authors of their own misery; in permitting these foreign robbers to form a settlement on their island, they had suffered but too severely the consequences of their facility, it remained now but to choose between liberty and death. While standing on a rising ground, her loose robes and long dishevelled hair floating in the wind, a spear in her hand, her features animated, and her eyes sparkling with vengeance, Boadicea reminded the people of their wrongs, she drew from her bosom a hare, which she had concealed, and which she suffered to escape among the crowd. The Britons, exulting, hailed the omen; the spirit of

revolt spread through their ranks; revenge glowed in every heart, while they shouted to be led against the enemy.

Private and individual injury swelled the tide of public hatred. The Roman veterans, newly planted in the colony of Camalodunum, had driven from their houses its inhabitants, seized their lands, and treated them as vassals and captives; while, in a temple erected in honour of the emperor, a lasting tyranny appeared to menace them.

In proportion as the spirit of the Britons rose, the confidence of the enemy declined. The statue of Victory, in the colony of Camalodunum, fell without an apparent cause; strange sounds murmured through the court and theatre; the sea assumed a crimson hue; while female fanatics foretold the subversion of the colony.

Boadicea, at the head of a numerous army, attacked Camalodunum, and, with unrelenting fury, slaughtered the Roman troops, to whom no quarter was given: in the destruction of its victims, savage vengeance refined upon cruelty. Suetonius Paulinus, with ten thousand men, marching to the aid of his countrymen, a dreadful conflict ensued. The Britons, to animate their courage, or share in their triumphs and spoils, brought to the field, in waggons, their wives and

children. The queen, her daughters seated by her side, rode in her chariot from rank to rank, exhorting and encouraging the troops, reminding them of their former victories under her banner, of the indignities suffered by her and her family, of their own peculiar wrongs, of the barbarities and oppressions of the enemy, while she exulted in the protection of Heaven, already manifested in the discomfiture of the Romans, whose vanquished legions had spread terror through their army. She entreated her soldiers to press their advantage, to confide in their own strength, and in the justice of their cause: proposing to them her own example, who, though a *woman*, had determined on victory or death—'Let the *men* who prefer life,' added she, in a raised and dignified tone, 'live dishonoured and slaves.'

'While their heroic queen thus roused the spirit and animated the courage of the Britons, Paulinus, confiding in his veteran troops, encouraged them to despise the shouts and menaces of barbarians, ill-armed and undisciplined, feeble and easily discomfited, encumbered by their numbers and baggage, and ready to flee on the first attack. The event of a battle, he observed, depended less on numbers, than on the skill and valour of the few, whose glory their apparent inferiority would

enhance. He enjoined them to keep their ranks close, and, having hurled their javelins, to have recourse to their swords; cautioned them lest they should yield to the temptation to plunder, and thus suffer themselves to be separated, or thrown off their guard. The troops, having signified their approbation by loud acclamations, the charge was, by the order of their general, sounded to battle.

The Britons, at a distance from the enemy, triumphed in the hope of appalling them with numbers; but as the legions, with a dauntless aspect, sword in hand, advanced to meet them, they fell into disorder and precipitately fled: the baggage and waggons, in which their families were stationed, obstructing their flight, a total defeat and a dreadful carnage ensued. Eighty thousand Britons were left on the field, while their merciless oppressors reaped, with an inconsiderable loss, a complete victory. The battle was fought in the eighth year of the reign of Nero, A.D. 61. The scene of action is supposed to have been on Salisbury plain. Boadicea perished, either voluntarily by poison, or from the effects of her despair, a short time after.

She is described by Dion Cassius as large in stature, her aspect full of dignity, her complexion

fair, her hair yellow, spreading over her shoulders in luxuriant profusion, and reaching below her waist; her eyes fierce and piercing, her voice strong and sonorous.

Stonehenge, it is conjectured by some, might have been erected to the memory of this heroic and unfortunate British queen. In proof of this opinion the rudeness of the structure is alleged; human bones occasionally dug up, prove it to have been a sepulchre; while, contrary to the customs of the Romans on these occasions, it bears no inscription. Others have believed it to be a monument in commemoration of the British lords, perfidiously murdered by the Saxons, on an interview near the place. In contradiction to this notion, may be alleged, the armour, of large and antique fashion, against which the spade and pick-axe have sometimes struck. The Britons slain by pagan Hengist, unconscious of treachery, were unarmed. These stones are fabulously represented by Geoffrey Arthur of Monmouth, as possessing medicinal qualities, and as having been brought from Ireland, by force of arms, for the purpose of a *memoria*, at the instigation of Merlin. Camden speaks of the discovery near Stonehenge, eighty years ago, of a plate of mixed metal, inscribed with characters, which the learned of those times

were incompetent to decypher. This inscription, he conjectures, might be connected with the monument, and was probably an ancient British memorial of some eminent person, and possibly of Boadicea.

Tacitus—Biographia Britannica, &c.—History of England.

ANNE BOLEYN.

Anne Boleyn, the vicissitudes of whose fortunes have rendered her name celebrated, descended, on the side of her mother, from the duke of Norfolk, whose daughter her father, sir Thomas Boleyn, had espoused. Anne was born in 1507, and carried to France at seven years of age, by the sister of Henry VIII. who was given in marriage to Lewis XII. After the death of Lewis, his widow returned to her native country, but Anne remained in France, in the service of Claudia, the wife of Francis I.; and, after her decease, with the duchess of Alençon, a princess of singular merit. The beauty and acccomplishments of Anne attracted, even at a very early age, great admiration at the French court.

The year of her return to England is uncertain; but it appears to have been about the time when

scruples were first entertained by Henry VIII. respecting the legality of his marriage with the betrothed wife and widow of his brother, Catherine of Arragon. In his visits to the queen, to whom Anne Boleyn became maid of honour, Henry had an opportunity of observing her beauty and captivating manners. Anne quickly perceived her influence over the heart of the monarch, whose passion, either from principle or policy, she resolutely resisted. The enamoured Henry, despairing of succeeding with the lady but upon honourable terms, was, by her conduct, stimulated to redouble his efforts to procure a release from his former engagements. For this purpose, he resolved on making applications to the court of Rome.

The virtue of Anne Boleyn, in the peculiar circumstances in which she was placed, must certainly be considered as equivocal; in becoming the concubine of the king, she would perhaps have committed an action less reprehensible, than in being the cause of the dethronement and humiliation of the queen, whose tenderness and fidelity to her husband, during twenty years, added to her irreproachable conduct, deserved a better fate. Not content with robbing Catherine of the heart of her husband, her rival determined to hurl her

from the throne, and to usurp her privileges and dignities; while the daughter of the unfortunate Catherine, whose misfortunes sunk her to a premature grave, was necessarily involved in the unmerited disgrace of her mother.

The amorous impatience of Henry suffered him not to wait for the dissolution of his nuptials with Catherine; a private marriage united him with Anne Boleyn on the 14th of November, 1532. The marriage was made public on the pregnancy of Anne, who, on Easter-eve, 1533, was declared queen of England, and crowned the 1st of the following June. To complete the satisfaction of Henry, the new queen was, on the seventh of the ensuing September, delivered of a daughter (afterwards queen Elizabeth), on whom was conferred the title of princess of Wales. This step was somewhat irregular, since Elizabeth, though presumptive, was not apparent, heir to the crown. But Mary, the daughter of the king by his former marriage, having been honoured with the same title, Henry determined to bestow on the child of Anne Boleyn equal marks of distinction, and also to exclude Mary from every hope of the succession.

The affection of the king for his new queen seemed, for a time, to increase rather than diminish with

possession; by a proper measure of reserve and indulgence, she long contrived to keep alive his passion, and to manage his intractable spirit. During the six years that the divorce was pending, the attachment of Henry for Anne had been constant and fervent, his ardor seeming to increase with the obstacles that opposed it; but with the removal of these obstacles, his love, which opposition had served but to inflame, began to languish and visibly decay. The enemies of Anne, who were the first to perceive the change, eagerly sought to widen the breach. She had brought forth a dead son; a disappointment which produced upon the irritable temper of the monarch, whose desire for male offspring had been extreme, the most violent effects; while his superstition made the innocent mother accountable for this misfortune. But jealousy was the engine which the adversaries of the queen employed for her destruction with the greatest success.

No real stigma has been thrown on the conduct of Anne, but a certain levity of spirit and gaiety of character, which she had probably acquired from her education in France, rendered her manners unguarded. The rigid decorums, practised at that time in the court of England,

were peculiarly adverse to the frank and lively temper of Anne: more vain than proud, she took a coquetish pleasure in beholding the effect of her charms, and indulged herself in an easy familiarity with those who had been formerly her equals. Her popular manners offended the dignity of Henry; if the lover had been blind to the foibles of his mistress, the husband became but too quick-sighted to the indiscretions of his wife. Malignant persons barbarously misinterpreted the innocent freedoms of the queen, and aggravated the suspicions of Henry. The viscountess of Rocheford, a woman of a profligate character, who had married the queen's brother, but who entertained for her sister-in-law a mortal hatred, poisoned the mind of the king by the most cruel insinuations: restrained neither by humanity, truth, nor decency, she accused her own husband of a criminal intercourse with his sister; and not content with a slander so wicked and injurious, she affected to construe into marks of particular affection, every obliging word or action of the queen, to those who, by their offices, had access to her person.

Henry Norris, Weston, and Brereton, gentlemen of the king's chamber, were, with Mark Smeton, groom of the chamber, observed to be

favoured with the friendship of Anne, whom they served with zeal and attachment. The jealousy of the king, which had no particular facts for its foundation, seized on the slightest circumstances: it was the jealousy of pride rather than of love, that, subject to no alternations of suspicion and remorse, is stern, severe, and unrelenting.

A passion for a new object had vanquished, in the heart of a capricious despot, the small remains of tenderness for Anne, who was supplanted in the affections of her husband by Jane, daughter of sir John Seymour, a young lady of singular beauty and merit. Henry, whose gallantries always sought a legal gratification, was little scrupulous in the sacrifices which they exacted from him, while he plunged himself into crimes of an infinitely deeper dye than those he appeared so anxious to avoid. By the desire of raising to his bed and throne the new object of his fancy, he was induced to lend an eager ear to every suggestion, however lightly founded, that tended to criminate the unhappy Anne.

His jealousy, over which he secretly brooded, first manifested itself at a tournament at Greenwich, where the queen having let fall her handkerchief, he construed this accident into a signal of gallantry, and retiring instantly from

the place, sent orders to confine her to her chamber. Norris, Brereton, Weston, and Smeton, were, together with the viscount Rochefort, immediately arrested and thrown into prison. Anne, astonished at this violence and injustice, on an occasion so slight and inadequate, was willing to persuade herself that the king meant merely to try her; but, convinced at length that he was but too much in earnest, she reflected seriously on his inflexible temper, and prepared herself for what was to ensue.

She was the next day sent to the Tower, and, on her way thither, informed of what she had till then been unconscious, the crimes and misdemeanors alleged against her. Unaffectedly astonished at the atrocity of the accusation, she made earnest protestations of her innocence, and, as she entered the prison, fell on her knees, and called God to witness how guiltless she was of the offences so lightly imputed to her charge. Thrown, by surprise and confusion, into an hysterical malady, she frankly confessed, in the intervals of the disorder, some levities and indiscretions which her vivacity had incited her to commit, and of which the simplicity of the confession afforded a proof of her innocence. She owned, that she had once rallied Norris on his de-

laying to marry, by telling him that he probably waited till she should become a widow. She had also, she said, reproved Weston for his attentions to a kinswoman of hers, and his indifference towards his wife: when he had told her, in reply, that she had mistaken the object of his affections, and intimated, that it was herself to whom he was devoted. But this temerity had not, she declared, been suffered to pass without a severe reproof. She also affirmed, that Smeton had been only twice in her chamber, both times to play on her harpsichord: yet, she acknowledged, that he had once had the presumption to tell her, 'that a look sufficed him.' The king, predetermined to find her guilty, considered these confessions, not as proofs of her simplicity and candour, but as presumptive evidence of her guilt.

The sweetness and beneficence of Anne's temper had, during her prosperity, made her numberless friends; but, in her falling fortunes, no one afforded her either assistance or support; no one even attempted to interpose between her and the fury of the king; she, whose appearance had dressed every face in smiles, was now abandoned, unpitied and alone, to her adverse destiny. Her uncle, the duke of Norfolk, with whom the connections of party were stronger than those of

blood, appeared among her most implacable enemies. The catholics trusted, that by her death the king's quarrel with Rome would be accommodated; that he would resume his natural bent, and return to the bosom of the church. Cranmer only, of all the adherents of Anne, still retained for her his friendship; and, by every means within his power, sought to soften the animosity of the king. Anne addressed to her husband a letter from the Tower, of tender expostulation and complaint, full of protestations of her innocence; of which the following is a literal copy:

"SIR,

"Your grace's displeasure and my imprisonment are things so strange unto me, as what to write or what to excuse I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send unto me (willing me to confess a truth, and so obtain your favour) by such an one whom you know to be mine ancient professed enemy, I no sooner received this message by him than I rightly conceived your meaning; and if, as you say, confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty perform your command.

"But let not your grace ever imagine that

your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault where not so much as a thought thereof preceded. And, to speak a truth, never prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn: With which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your grace's pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation or received queenship, but that I always looked for such an alteration as I now find; for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your grace's fancy, the least alteration I knew was fit and sufficient to draw that fancy to some other object. You have chosen me from a low estate to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire. If then you found me worthy of such honour, good your grace let not any light fancy, or bad counsel of mine enemies, withdraw your princely favour from me; neither let that stain, that unworthy stain, of a disloyal heart towards your good grace, ever cast so foul a blot on your most dutiful wife, and the infant princess your daughter. Try me, good king, but let me have a lawful trial, and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and judges; yea let me receive an open trial, for my

truth shall fear no open shame; then shall you see either mine innocence cleared, your suspicion and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. So that whatsoever God or you may determine of me, your grace may be freed from an open censure; and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your grace is at liberty both before God and man not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unlawful wife, but to follow your affection already settled on that party for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto, your grace not being ignorant of my suspicion therein.

"But, if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander, must bring you the enjoying of your desired happiness, then I desire of God that he will pardon your great sin therein, and likewise mine enemies, the instruments thereof, and that he will not call you to a strict account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at his general judgment-seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear, and in whose judgment I doubt not (whatsoever the world may think of me) mine innocence shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared.

"My last and only request shall be, that my

self may only bear the burden of your grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen who (as I understand) are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request, and I will so leave to trouble your grace any farther, with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity to have your grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions. From my doleful prison in the Tower, this sixth of May;

"Your most loyal and ever faithful wife,

"ANNE BOLEYN."

This address, so pathetic and eloquent, failed to touch the heart of a tyrant, which licentious and selfish gratification had steeled. Norris, Weston, Brereton, and Smeton, were brought to trial; but no legal evidence was produced against them. A hearsay report from a lady Wingfield, since dead, was the principal proof of their guilt. By a vain hope of life, Smeton was at length induced to confess a criminal correspondence with the queen; a confession which little availed him, and from which even her enemies despaired of gaining any advantage: he was never confronted with Anne,

but immediately executed; as were also Weston and Brereton. To Norris, who had been a favourite with the king, an offer was made of life, on condition that he would criminate the queen. Magnanimously disdaining the baseness proposed to him, he declared, that in his conscience he believed her wholly guiltless; that he would accuse her of nothing; and that rather than calumniate an innocent person, he would die a thousand deaths.

The queen and her brother were tried by a jury of peers; their uncle, the duke of Norfolk, presiding as lord high-steward. The evidence of incest amounted to no more, than that Rocheford had been seen, in company, to lean on the bed of his sister. Anne also, it was said, had affirmed to her favourites, that the king had never possessed her heart, and that to each of them apart she had declared that *he only* was the object of her attachment. This strained interpretation of guilt was brought under the statute of the twenty-fifth of the king's reign, by which it was declared criminal to throw any slander upon the king, queen, or their issue. Such absurdities were, in those times, admitted, as a justification for sacrificing an innocent woman and a queen to the caprice of a cruel and arbitrary tyrant.

Anne, though unassisted by counsel, defended herself with so much clearness and presence of mind, that the spectators unanimously believed her to be guiltless. Judgment was, however, passed by the court both against her and her brother: she was sentenced by the verdict to be beheaded or burned, according to the king's pleasure. 'Oh! Father,' said she, lifting up her eyes when this dreadful sentence was pronounced—'O Creator, thou who art the way, the truth, and the life, thou knowest that I have not deserved this death!' Then, turning to the judges, she pathetically declared her innocence.

Not satisfied with this barbarous tyranny, Henry resolved wholly to annul his marriage with Anne Boleyn, and to pronounce her issue illegitimate. He called to remembrance, that, soon after the appearance of Anne in the court of England, there were some rumours of an attachment between her and the earl of Northumberland, then lord Percy, whom he now questioned respecting this engagement. Northumberland took an oath, before two archbishops, that no contract or promise of marriage whatever had passed between them: upon this asseveration he received the sacrament before the duke of Norfolk, and others of the privy-council, accompanying the ceremony

with the most solemn protestations of the truth of his information. But the unhappy Anne, threatened with the execution of the utmost rigor of her sentence, was prevailed on to calumniate herself, and to confess some impediments to her marriage with the king. The primate, who sat as judge, thought himself obliged by this avowal, with whatever pain and reluctance, to pronounce the marriage null and invalid. Henry, in his rage against the innocent victim of his levity, perceived not the inconsistency of his proceedings: if the marriage had been illegal, no adultery could exist.

The queen, hopeless of redress, and resigned to her fate, prepared herself to submit without repining. In her last message to the king, she acknowledged obligation to him, for having advanced her from a private gentlewoman, first to the dignity of a marchioness, and afterwards to the throne; and now, since he could raise her no higher in this world, he was sending her to be a saint in heaven. She earnestly recommended her daughter to his care, and renewed her protestations of innocence and fidelity. She made the same declarations before the lieutenant of the Tower, and to every person who approached her; while she continued to behave, not only with sere-

nity, but with her usual cheerfulness. 'The executioner,' said she to the lieutenant, 'is, I hear, very expert; and my neck (grasping it with her hand, and laughing heartily) is very slender.'

When brought to the scaffold, she assumed a tone less high, recollecting probably the obstinacy of her predecessor, queen Catherine, and its effects upon Mary her daughter: maternal love triumphed at this solemn moment over the just indignation of the sufferer. She said, she came to die, as she was sentenced by the law; that she would accuse no one, nor advert to the ground upon which she was judged. She prayed fervently for the king, calling him a most merciful and gentle prince, and acknowledging that he had been to her a good and gracious sovereign. She added, that if any one should think proper to canvass her cause, she desired him to judge the best.

She was beheaded by the executioner of Calais, who was brought over for the purpose, as being particularly expert in his horrible profession. Her body was thrown negligently into a common elm chest, made to hold arrows, and was buried in the Tower.

The innocence of Anne Boleyn of the charges alleged against her, can scarcely be questioned. The tyrant himself knew not whom to accuse as

her lover; no proof was brought against any of the persons named. Irregularities so atrocious as those implied by the accusations against her, could not have been concealed. But the king made for her an effectual apology, by marrying Jane Seymour the very day succeeding to that on which Anne had been immolated: in his impatience to gratify his new caprice, humanity, policy, and decency, were violated without remorse. The terrible catastrophe of a woman whom he had once tenderly loved, was incapable of affecting his sensual and callous mind.

In a new parliament, which was called on these events, Henry assured the people, that, notwithstanding the misfortunes which had attended his two former marriages, he had been induced, *wholly for their good*, to venture on a third. This profession was received by the speaker with suitable gratitude, and the king praised for his wonderful gifts both of grace and nature: he was compared to Solomon * for justice and prudence; to Sampson for strength and fortitude; and to Absalom for beauty and comeliness. Henry humbly

* The similitude of Henry to Solomon might have been made out with greater truth and propriety.

disavowed these commendations, or, if they were really possessed, piously ascribed them to the bounty of Almighty God.

The servile parliament, equally complacent in deeds as in words, to the passions of a cruel despot, ratified his divorce from Anne Boleyn, who, with all her accomplices, was attainted: both the former marriages of the king were declared to be illegitimate; it was even made treason to assert their legality, or to throw slander on the present queen, on whose issue the crown was settled: or, in case of the failure of children by this marriage, Henry was impowered to dispose of the succession either by *will*, or by letters patent, &c.

Hume's History of England—Bayle's Historical Dictionary, &c.

MADAME BONTEMS.

THIS lady, who was born at Paris in 1718, possessed a mind highly cultivated. She gave to her country an accurate and elegant translation of "Thomson's Seasons," in 1759. She was not less distinguished for the qualities of her heart, than for her mental endowments. An amiable and select society were accustomed to meet at her

house. She translated various productions from the English, and died April 18th, 1768.

Dictionnaire Historique des Femmes Célèbres, &c.

CATHERINE BOVEY.

CATHERINE, daughter of John Riches, esq. merchant of London, was married at fifteen years of age to William Bovey, esq. a gentleman of liberal fortune, and lord of the manor of Flaxley in Gloucestershire. The following description is given of this lady in the New Atalantis. "Her person has as many charms as can be desired. She is one of those lofty, dark, and lasting beauties, that strike with reverence, and yet delight. There is not a feature in her face, nor any thing in her person and manners, that could be exchanged for any other, and she not prove a loser. Her mind, her conduct, her sense and judgment, her constancy, her knowledge, her wit, and conversation, are all admirable; so much above what is lovely in the sex, that, shut but your eyes (and allow for the music of her voice), your mind would be charmed, as thinking yourself conversing with the most knowing, the most refined of the

other. Free from levity and superficialness, her sense is solid and perspicuous. She is so real, so perfect an economist, that, taking in all the duties of life, she disdains not to stoop to the most inferior. She knows all that a man can know, without despising what, as a woman, she ought not to be ignorant of. Her modesty is equal to her merit; she wishes to live unknown, declining all public assemblies, content to possess her soul in freedom and tranquillity at home, among the few whom she honours with her friendship."

At the age of twenty-two, this lady was left a widow, without children, and with an affluent fortune; she was also sole heiress to the property of her father, which was considerable. Her wealth, added to the graces and accomplishments of her mind and person, procured her numerous admirers, who earnestly sought to obtain her heart and her hand. But, preferring to any new engagement the freedom and independence of a single life, and the undisputed disposition of her fortunes, she uniformly rejected every address. Her possessions were devoted to acts of benevolence and kindness, and to the encouragement and advancement of letters. By the force of her talents, by study, application, and the conversation of men of literature, she surmounted the dis-

advantages of her education, and became a proficient in various branches of learning and knowledge.

Sir Richard Steele, addressing this lady in an epistle dedicatory, prefixed to the second volume of the Ladies' Library, 1714, observes—That, instead of assemblies, books and solitude were her choice; and, that she had gone on the study of what she should be, rather than attend to the celebration of what she was. "Thus," says he, "with the charms of the fairest of your own sex, and knowledge not inferior to the more learned of ours, a closet, a bower, or some beauteous scene of rural nature, has constantly robbed the world of a lady's appearance, who never was beheld but with gladness to her visitants, nor ever admired but with pain to herself. But a constant distribution of large charities, a search for objects of new bounty, and a skilful choice of modest merit or suffering virtue, touch the souls of those who partake your goodness too deeply to be borne, without enquiring for, or celebrating, their benefactress. I should be loth to offend your delicacy in this particular; but I know, when I say this, the fatherless and the widow, the neglected man of merit, the wretch on the sick bed, in a word, the distressed in all forms, will from this hint

learn to trace the kind hand which has so often, as from heaven, conveyed to them what they have asked in the anguish of their souls, when none could hear but he who has blessed you with so ample a fortune, and given you a soul to employ it in his service."

The merits of this lady are also celebrated by Dr. Hickes, in the preface to a learned and elaborate work, "*Linguarum Septentrionalium Thesaurus.*" An honorary marble monument, on which her perfections are enumerated in an inscription, is erected to the memory of Mrs. Bovey, in the abbey church at Westminster. By this incription we are informed, that "she died January 21st, 1726, in the 57th year of her age, at Haxley, her seat in Gloucestershire, and was buried there, where her name will be long remembered; and where several of her benefactions at that place, as well as others, are particularly recorded." This monument was erected by her executrix, Mrs. Mary Pope, who resided with her near forty years, in perfect and uninterrupted friendship.

There is also an inscription on her monument at Haxley, in which her hospitality and her charities are mentioned; her distributions to the poor, to decayed families, to free-schools, to the

prisons, to her poor neighbours, the instruction of whose children she herself superintended; also her bounties to the church, and bequeathments at her death, namely: Towards founding a college in the island of Bermuda, 500*l.* To the grey-coat hospital, in St. Margaret's, Westminster, 500*l.* To the blue-coat hospital in Westminster, 200*l.* To the charity-school of Christ's-Church parish, in Southwark, 400*l.* To augment the living of the same place, 1200*l.* To put out poor children of this parish apprentices, the interest of 400*l.* for ever; of which sum 160*l.* had been given by Mr. Clarke and Mr. Bovey. To be distributed as her executrix should think fit, among those whom she had apprenticed out during her life-time, 400*l.* Lastly, she designed the re-building of this chapel, which design was executed by Mrs. Mary Pope.

Ballard's British Ladies—Biographium Fœmineum.

CLE'MENCE DE BOURGES.

Cle'mence de Bourges, the descendant of a respectable family at Lyons, was born in the sixteenth century. The contemporary of Louise Labe (*La belle Cordiere*), she was no less distin-

guished for her talents and acquirements. She added to an irreproachable life, the charms of genius, and the graces of her sex. Celebrated for her poetical compositions, and her skill in music, a congenial taste for the fine arts united Clémence in strict friendship with Louise, whose conduct at length relaxed the bond, and compelled her more exemplary friend, with whatever reluctance, to dissolve the connection. To the affectionate heart of Clémence, whom a severer trial yet awaited, this separation gave the most poignant regret.

Jean de Peyrat, son of a lieutenant-general at Lyons, a brave and gallant officer, had won the affections of Clémence de Bourges. The lovers were betrothed, when Jean, a captain in the light horse, was called to the siege of Beaurepaire in Dauphiné, and, on the 30th of September, 1561, received, in combating against the Huguenots, a mortal wound. Clémence, in the ensuing year, fell a martyr to grief, and followed her lover to the grave. Honoured and esteemed in the place of her birth, her funeral, celebrated with extraordinary pomp, was attended by a numerous train of the most distinguished Lyonese, who, with their heads crowned with flowers, followed the corpse. The memory of her talents

and virtues was consecrated in the writings of the first poets of the age. Her compositions, smooth and harmonious, are esteemed for their chasteness and poetical taste.

A. Thicknesses's Sketches of the Lives and Writings of the Ladies of France—Dictionnaire Historique.

ANTOINETTE BOURIGNON.

ANTOINETTE BOURIGNON, a singular enthusiast of the seventeenth century, was born at Lisle in Flanders, January 13th, 1616. She appeared so much deformed at her birth, that it was debated for some days, in the family, whether the infant ought to be permitted to live: but, as she grew older, her figure improved. She gave early indications of an extraordinary character; at four years of age she was disturbed by the immorality of the people of Lisle, and desired to be carried into a country of *Christians*, for she could not be persuaded, that persons, whose conduct was so opposite to the precepts of Jesus Christ, had a title to be called by his name.

Her father and mother had frequent domestic disagreements; the little Antoinette, on these occasions, took the part of her mother, and endeavoured to soften her father, whose temper was

harsh and severe, by her infant caresses. From these scenes, which made a strong impression upon her mind, she conceived an aversion to marriage. 'My God, grant that I may never marry!' was her daily prayer. Thus early disgusted with the world, she threw all the ardor of her mind, as she advanced towards maturity, into devotion, in which she became an extravagant fanatic.

Her father, incapable of entering into these refinements, and desirous of establishing his daughter in life, promised her in marriage to a Frenchman, who demanded her hand; and, without considering the consent of Antoinette as essential to the engagement, appointed Easter-day, in 1630, for the celebration of the nuptials. The young lady fled, to avoid a measure so coercive, disguised in the habit of a hermit; but was stopped at Blacon, a village of Hainault, on suspicion of her sex. An officer of the guards had seized her, from whom she was delivered by the curate of the place, who, observing in her something extraordinary, mentioned her to the archbishop of Cambray, by whom she was sent back to her father.

Being persecuted soon after with new proposals of matrimony, she absconded a second time to avert a compulsion that appeared to her so odious.

She once more made a visit to the archbishop, and obtained his permission to form in the country a small community of young women, who, like herself, should determine to abjure the nuptial tie. She had conceived an aversion to a cloister, having early learned, that the spirit of the Gospel must not be sought for in convents. The archbishop afterwards retracting the licence he had granted her, Antoinette retired to Liege, whence she returned privately to Lisle, where she resided many years in great privacy and simplicity.

Her patrimonial estate at length falling to her, she determined at first to reject it; but afterwards altered this resolution, for which she gave the following reasons: 'First, that it might not come into the hands of those who had no right to it. Secondly, that it might not be possessed by those who would make an ill use of it. Thirdly, that God had shewed her, she should have occasion for it for his glory.' This patrimony, which she wisely resolved to accept, appears to have been somewhat considerable. Her habits were simple, and her wants few; she bestowed no charities, her wealth therefore daily accumulated. John de Saulieu, the son of a peasant, became enamoured of the lady's riches, and resolved to address her. With this view, he assumed the prophetic cha-

racter, but, like the oracles of old, with great wariness; and insinuated himself into the confidence of the pious Antoinette by discourses of refined spirituality. At length he threw off the mask, and avowed more earthly motives: his suit was listened to with little complacency, and somewhat severely checked. On finding his fair mistress intractable, the lover grew desperate, and obliged her to apply to the magistracy for protection. This furious enamoretta threatened, if denied admission, to break the doors and windows of his dulcinea, and to murder her, though he should be hanged for it in the market-place of Lisle. The provost, to whom the distressed damsel had recourse for protection, sent two armed men to guard her house. Saulieu, in revenge, basely attempted to blast the reputation of the woman, who had despised alike his arts and his menaces; he reported in the town that she had promised him marriage, and that she had even suffered him to anticipate its privileges. A reconciliation was, however, soon after effected between them; Saulieu was persuaded to retract his slanders, and to leave mademoiselle Bourignon at liberty; when a young devotee, more complacent, consoled him for his disappointment.

But our fair recluse had not yet come to the

end of her persecutions. The nephew of the curate of St. Andrew's conceived a passion for her, and, as he resided in her neighbourhood, frequently attempted to force an entrance into her house. Antoinette threatened to abandon the place, if she was not relieved from the presumption of this new and adventurous lover, whose uncle, on her complaints, drove him from his house. The passion of the young man was, by the cruelty of his mistress, converted into rage, and, in a fit of desperation, he discharged a musket through her chamber window; while he affirmed among the neighbours that she was his espoused wife. The devotees, offended by this report, threatened to affront mademoiselle Bourignon, should they meet her in the streets: the preachers were obliged to interfere, and to publish from the pulpit the innocence of the injured lady.

Some time after these adventures, Antoinette was elected governess of an hospital, in which, having taken the habit and order of St. Augustin, she shut herself up in 1658. In this situation a new calamity befel her, not more horrible than strange. The hospital was infected with sorcery; all the girls who inhabited it having made a contract with the devil. The governess was taken up on this extraordinary occasion, and examined

before the magistrates of Lisle: nothing, however, was proved against her; but, to prevent further persecution, she wisely determined to abandon her station. She then retired to Ghent, in 1662, where God discovered to her some great secrets.

About this period she acquired a faithful friend, who remained attached to her through life, and who left her at his death a good estate. This gentleman, whose name was de Cort, was one of the fathers of the oratory, and their superior; he was also a director of an hospital for poor children. M. de Cort was the first *spiritual child* of madame Bourignon, of which the following quotation may afford an explanation: "It is certainly known by all who are acquainted with Antoinette Bourignon (let wicked and impious scoffers say what they please), that when any persons received, by her conversation or writings, light and strength to forsake the world, and give themselves to God, she felt pains and throbs similar to those of a woman in child-birth, as it is said of her whom St. John saw in the 12th of the Revelations. She experienced these pains in a greater or smaller degree, in proportion as the truths she had delivered had more or less strength in their operation on the souls of these her spiritual offspring."

M. de Cort was twice successively divinely warned and threatened, to lend his property to some relations, who were endeavouring to drain an island which the sea had overflowed, in the country of Holstein, where he determined to prepare a retreat for the persecuted disciples of God. He sold a seat in this island to his spiritual mother, madame Bourignon, who, when she had published at Amsterdam her book entitled "The Light of the World," prepared to retire thither, in 1668. She also wrote, at Brabant, several treatises and epistles; and, after her persecution at Lisle, engaged in the disputes of the Jansenists and Molinists. She made a longer stay at Amsterdam, with her proselyte, than she had at first intended. She was here visited by all descriptions of persons, particularly by prophets and prophetesses: the popularity of her discourses inspired her with sanguine hopes of effecting a reformation in this nation of traders; but, commerce prevailing, among this phlegmatic people, over spiritual motives, her expectations ended in disappointment. Her books and sermons were more numerous than her disciples; but even in Holland she was not without admirers. The celebrated Labadie, with his disciples, became

desirous of forming a community with Antoinette in Noordstrandt, the newly recovered island.

Labadie had offered to M. de Cort a large sum of money for the purchase of the whole island, but Antoinette prevailed on her proselyte to reject this proposal. 'Should you determine to accept it,' said she, 'you must leave me behind you: because I perceive and know, that we can never agree together. Their opinions, and the spirit that governs them, are altogether contrary to my LIGHT, and the spirit that governs me.' She had a divine vision respecting M. Labadie, wherein she saw, in the spirit, a little man very busy, with a great pole in his hand, with which he strove to hinder the fall of a large building, or a church that was falling. She was fully persuaded, from some conferences she had held with him, that this man had no other illumination than that of the learned of those times; reading, study, and barren speculation; and that he was in no respect enlightened by God, or directed by divine inspiration. She had formed a terrible idea of the principles of the Cartesians, who had the temerity to set up the light of reason as a guide. God, she affirmed, had shewn, and even expressly declared to her, that this error of Cartesianism was the

worst and the most accursed of all the heresies that were ever in the world; that it was a formal atheism, or rejection of God, in whose place corrupt reason was substituted. Every kind of philosophy she held in equal abhorrence, while she declared to the philosophers, that their malady proceeded from pretending to comprehend all things by the activity of the human intellect, without waiting for the divine illumination of faith, which requires the sacrifice of our reason and weak understandings, that God may diffuse in our minds his divine light: that, by the activity of corrupt reason, true knowledge is driven out of our souls: and that such reasoners are the real atheists and the contemners of God.

The conversations of madame Bourignon with God were very frequent at Amsterdam, where she had many visions and particular revelations; and where she also composed many books, which were but little read by the worldly-minded burghers. M. de Cort died the 12th of November, 1669, and left his spiritual directress heiress to his effects; an event which exposed her to more persecution than she had even suffered for her doctrines, and involved her in many law-suits. Being at the same time in ill health, and ill attended, she endured about this period great distress.

In 1671 she left Holland, with an intention to go to Noorstrandt. She stopped on her way at several places in Holstein, where she found it necessary to dismiss some of her disciples, who from sinister motives had enlisted in her suite. She began to despair of collecting a flock of *new Christians*, when she perceived, that every one appeared solicitous only for his own interest and convenience. Her pen grew now so prolific, and her productions so numerous, that she thought proper to provide herself with a printing-house, from which her works issued in different editions of French, Dutch, and German languages. Her tenets and her morals having been attacked by some writers, she vindicated herself in a performance entitled "The Testimony of Truth;" in which the clergy were treated somewhat severely. This was certainly not the way to remain at peace. Two lutheran ministers took up their pens, and entered the lists against her; declaring, that many persons had been beheaded and burned whose heresies were more tolerable than those of madame Bourignon. The Labadists also wrote against her, and her press was ordered to be shut up.

In December, 1673, she retired to Flensburg, where her enemies stirred up the people against

her: she was accused of sorcery and witchcraft, and compelled privately to retreat: persecuted from town to town, she was at length obliged to quit Holstein, and to take refuge in Hamburg, where her arrival was no sooner known, than endeavours were used to seize her. Having concealed herself for some days, she fled to East Friesland, where the baron of Lutsburg granted her his protection. The direction of an hospital was here given to her, to which she consecrated her industry and her cares. If she reserved her purse on this occasion, she gave for it two reasons, both of which, it must be allowed, are admirable: First, she alleged that her effects had already been dedicated to God, for the use of those persons who sincerely sought to be true Christians; and, secondly, that men and all things human were inconstant and not to be trusted. To this she added, that these poor people lived like beasts, who had no souls to save; and that she would rather throw her goods, which had been consecrated to Heaven, into the sea, than bestow on them the least mite. Her followers also adopted these prudent maxims. The people, who understood not these refinements, were disgusted by what they profanely called the sordid spirit of madame Bourignon; the authority of the baron

de Lutsburg proved insufficient for her protection: she again became the object of persecution, and was again compelled to fly.

In 1680, she passed once more into Holland, whence she departed to Franeker, in the province of Friesland, where, on the 30th of October, in the same year, she took a final leave of the world. Her constitution had been so good, that, in despite of all her vexations, and of a choleric and morose temper, she appeared at sixty years of age to be no more than forty. Her birth, the time of her commencing author, and her death, were each signalised by the appearance of a comet; a circumstance which could not fail of proving favourable to the promulgator of a new religion.

She is said to have exercised over her family and servants 'a government as cruel as that of the Sicilian court;' and to have justified this humour, so contrary to the meekness of the Gospel, by maintaining, that anger was the love of justice and true virtue; and alleging, as an example, the rigors used by the prophets and apostles. Having suffered some depredations upon her property by the dishonesty of those about her, she manifested a revengeful and vindictive spirit, severely censuring her friends for not pursuing these wretches with all the severity of the law.—'We

must prevent evil,' said she, 'and oppose it with all our might, wherever it is found.' Her system, of which an extract has been already given, bore a resemblance to that of the Quietists, excluding external worship, and requiring a cessation of the powers of the human intellect, that God might fill the mind with his divine light. She had also some very singular notions respecting *Antichrist*, whom she was persuaded would be a devil incarnate, or produced by a demoniac human generation. She was inveterate against the church of Rome; nor did she treat the protestant societies with greater moderation. She had beheld this *Antichrist*, or devil incarnate, in a vision, from which she described in verse, his stature, complexion, and hair. She pretended to write poetry without having studied its rules. "She learned every thing from God," says a satirical writer, "even the art of making verses; which she does in a manner that renders it manifest she had no other master."

Her writings appear to have made more proselytes than her discourses: she had, after her death, many disciples in Scotland, both among ecclesiastics and laymen. One of her principal works, entitled "The Light of the World," was published in that country, in 1696; to which the

translator added a long preface, declaring—'that the maid ought at least to pass for an extraordinary prophetess.' A controversy afterwards took place, respecting her doctrines, between Mr. Charles Lesley, a man of learning and merit, who exposed their absurdity, and Dr. Cockburn, against Messrs. Paret, de Cort, and the English translator of the *Lux Mundi*, who endeavoured to prove that Antoinette was divinely inspired, and had received a commission from God to reform the christian world. The Bourignonists replied, in an apology for their leader. The remains of this dispute still exist in some parts of North Britain.

Bayle's Historical Dictionary—Biographium Fæmineum, &c.

COUNTESS DE BREGY.

CHARLOTTE SAUMAISE DE CHASAN, niece of the learned Claude Saumaise, was born in Paris, in 1619. She received an excellent education under the direction of her uncle, whose cares were rewarded by her proficiency in every elegant acquirement. She espoused, while yet in early youth, M. de Flecelles, count de Bregy, lieutenant-general of the army, counsellor of the sword

of state, envoy-extraordinary to Poland, and afterwards embassador to Sweden. Celebrated for her wit, her beauty, and her talents, the countess was highly esteemed at court, and generally admired. She corresponded with Anne of Austria, to whom she was lady of honour; also with the queen of England; with Christine, queen of Sweden; and with the most distinguished and illustrious characters of Europe. Benserade addressed to this lady a complimentary epistle. The portrait she has drawn of herself is too curious to be omitted.

'My person,' says madame de Bregy, 'perfectly well proportioned, is neither too large nor too small. I have a certain negligent air, which convinces me that I am one of the finest women of my size. My hair is brown and glossy, my complexion brunette, clear and smooth. My features are regular, and the form of my face oval. My eyes are fine: a certain mixture in their colour renders them bright and sparkling. My nose is well formed; my mouth, though not small, agreeable; and my lips of a good colour. My teeth, exquisitely white and well arranged, are the finest in the world. My neck is beautiful, nor need I blush to display my hands and arms. My air is lovely and delicate. My glass persuades me that I see nothing superior, if equal, to the image

which it presents to me. My appearance is youthful, my dress neat and tasteful. Such is my exterior form.

" Others possibly are the best judges of our minds, since there is no mirror that reflects them faithfully. I am nevertheless persuaded that mine does not disgrace my person. It appears to me that I possess judgment to estimate things properly, though not by acquired knowledge*. My mind is at once penetrating, delicate, solid, and reasonable. I profit little by the wit of others; and succeed better when guided by my own discernment, than by the rules of art: I therefore use only my native good sense. I have frequently heard it observed (though, I confess, not without doubts of its truth), that in conversation with me, time passes more rapidly than in other society; and that, on serious subjects, my sentiments are worthy of being adopted. Of my humour I shall speak with the same sincerity.—I love praise, and return with interest the compliments paid to me; and, though somewhat haughty and scornful, I can be soft and conciliating. I neither oppose nor contradict the opinions of others; and I keep

* It would be a curious question to ask, What is the knowledge or judgment which we do not acquire?

my own reserved. I can with truth say, that I was born modest * and discreet, while pride has preserved in me these qualities. I am not only proud but indolent; and these defects have been productive of others. I take no pains to court favour; not even by flattery. I neither trouble myself to seek pleasure nor amusement; yet, to those who are at the pains to procure them for me, I hold myself greatly obliged. I appear lively and gay, but in moderation. I take care to offend no persons, unless they wilfully draw it upon themselves; and even then I avenge myself by raillery rather than by serious anger. I detest mimics, who begin with their enemies, and end with their best friends. I have no turn for intrigue; yet, should I engage in one, I am convinced I should conduct myself with prudence and discretion. I am resolute, persevering to obstinacy, and secret to excess. In one respect I own myself the most unjust of human beings: I wish evil to those who conform not to my desires. Such as are desirous of forming a friendship with me, must be at the trouble of making all the advances: in return, I make them amends,

* This appears not perfectly evident from the lady's account of herself.

and omit no opportunity of doing them service; I defend them against their adversaries, I speak in their praise, and sanction nothing which might prove detrimental to their interest. Time, which effaces impressions from the minds of others, gives strength to mine. I am truly disinterested, but not easily duped. I never choose a friend *because* he can do me service; but should he neglect the opportunity when it occurs, I regard him no longer; he forfeits my friendship. I have not sufficient virtue to disregard wealth and honours, but enough to be satisfied and resigned to my lot. To say truth, I am neither good nor bad enough to serve myself. I am not devout; though I have through life desired to become so. I am greatly affected by the merit of others, and apt to overrate my own; but my presumption * extends but to the qualities of the heart. I am long in deliberating; but, when once resolved, it is difficult to divert me from my purpose. I strictly observe a promise, and do not easily pardon a breach of faith in others. In asking favours for myself, I cannot persist; I had rather resign my expectations, than obtain them by servility. My attach-

* To this the reader perhaps may not quite agree.

ment and fidelity are secured by gratitude rather than by hope. Many of my faults proceed from pride; none from meanness. If unable to conquer the pride which governs my actions, I direct it to those purposes which capacitate me to appear without blushing."

Confessions of this nature, notwithstanding the vanity and egotism they may display, are always interesting. Madame de Bregy preserved her charms and her talents to an advanced age, and died at Paris, April 3d, 1693. She was interred with her husband at St. Gervais, and an epitaph inscribed over their remains.

Dictionnaire Historique des Femmes Célèbres—Ann Thicknesse's Sketches of the Lives and Writings of the Ladies of France.

MARCHIONESS DE CHATELET.

GABRIELLE-EMILIE DE BRETEUIL, *marquise de Chatelet*, descended from an ancient family of Picardy, was born on the 17th of December, 1706. While yet in early youth, she discovered uncommon capacity and vigor of mind. Captivated by the charms of poetry, she studied in their own language the first poets both of ancient and mo-

Rousseau was then at Brussels: madame de Chatelet refused to admit him to her presence, on account of his having satirised her father, the baron de Breteuil, with whom he had once lived as a domestic.

Voltaire accompanied madame de Chatelet to the court of Stanislaus at Luneville, in 1748. In this palace, in 1749, the illustrious marchioness de Chatelet breathed her last: she submitted to her fate with great fortitude, and expired in the forty-fourth year of her age. Her works afford a proof of the power and force of her mind, and of the capacity of her sex for profound investigation, and scientific research: she deservedly ranks among the first philosophical writers.

Preface to the Principes Mathematique, &c.—Dictionnaire Historique—Biographical Dictionary—Vie de Voltaire.

ANNE BROADSTREET.

Anne Broadstreet, of New England, in America, received for her poetical talents the title of the *Tenth Muse*. Her poems, which contained descriptions of the four elements, the four ages, the four seasons, the four monarchies, and the four humours, were printed in 1650.

LADY MILDRED BURLEIGH.

MILDRED, eldest daughter of sir Anthony Cooke, and of Anne his wife, daughter of sir William Fitz-Williams, of Milton, knt. was born in 1526. Her education was carefully superintended by her father, and her mind liberally cultivated; nor was she less distinguished for exemplary conduct than for learning and talents. She was instructed in the Greek and Latin languages: in the study of the former she was assisted by Mr. Lawrence, the celebrated Grecian. She read with facility and pleasure the works of Basil, Cyril, Chrysostome, and Gregory Nazianzen: she translated a piece of St. Chrysostome's from the Greek into English: and, on presenting the Bible, in Hebrew and other languages, to the university library of Cambridge, she sent with it an epistle in Greek of her own composition.

Dec. 21st, 1546, she gave her hand to sir Wm. Cecil, afterwards created lord Burleigh, lord high-treasurer of England, privy counsellor to queen Elizabeth, and knight of the order of the Garter. Several children were the fruit of this union; one son and two daughters only lived to maturity. Her son Robert Cecil married Elizabeth Brooke, daughter of lord Cobham. Anne Cecil gave her

hand, in the fifteenth year of her age, to Edward Vere, the seventeenth earl of Oxford of that name, and lord high-chamberlain of England. These nuptials proved unhappy.

Lady Burleigh, after a long and happy marriage of forty-two years, died in the sixty-third year of her age, April 4th, 1589, sincerely regretted by her husband, who in her lost an amiable wife and a sensible communicative friend, whom he had been accustomed to consult on the most important occasions, and whose knowledge in the science of politics, and of the affairs of the state, was little inferior to his own. She was buried in the abbey church at Westminster, and a magnificent monument erected to her memory.

Five days after her decease, lord Burleigh diverted his sorrow by composing Meditations * on his irreparable loss, in which, after expressing his high sense of the admirable qualities and virtues of his lady, he enumerates her acts of beneficence and liberality, many of which had, during her life, been carefully concealed even from himself.

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* These Meditations, composed in honour of lady Burleigh, and thus subscribed,—"Written at Colings's Lodge, by me, in sorrow, W. B. April 9th, 1589,"—are in possession of the hon. James West.

In these Meditations the reader is informed, that lady Burleigh had caused exhibitions to be bestowed, by the hands of the master of St. John's, Cambridge, for the perpetual maintenance of two scholars; for which purpose lands were purchased in the name of the dean of Westminster, who made them over, as from himself, to the college. She likewise gave, through the medium of Mr. Deanes, of Powles and Westminster, and of Mr. Alderly, a sum of money to the Haberdashers' Company in London, by which a provision was made of 126l. divided into twenties, to be lent every two years to six poor and industrious mechanics in Romford and Essex. Also, in like manner, twenty marks each to six persons in Cheshunt and Woolsham; a relief to be continued by way of loan. Likewise a provision for twenty poor in Cheshunt, to whom was to be given, the first Sunday in every month, a portion of bread, meat, and money. Four marks yearly for four sermons, to be preached quarterly by one of the preachers of St. John's college. These benefactions were concealed by the donor from every one: as a compliment to the fidelity of the gentlemen whose agency she used, lady Burleigh was accustomed to present to them small pieces of plate. Four times in the year she sent, secretly,

to all the prisons in London, money to buy bread, cheese, and beer, for four hundred persons: she also frequently distributed shirts and linen among the poor, both at Cheshunt and in London. To the master of St. John's college she gave a sum of money, to have fires in the hall of the college upon all Sundays and holidays, between the feasts of All Saints and Candlemas, when there were no fires at the charge of the college. She gave money, secretly, towards a building—"for a new waye at Cambridge to the comen scolles." She procured a numbet of books, some of which she bestowed on the university of Cambridge, the Bible in Hebrew, &c.: she also gave to the college of St. John's many Greek books in divinity, physics, and the sciences. She gave similar presents to Christ-church and St. John's college, Oxford, and to the college of Westminster. She provided annually wool and flax, which was distributed to women in Cheshunt parish, to work into yarn, which was overlooked by their benefactress, and frequently presented to them as a reward of their labour. At other times she caused it to be wrought into cloth, and gave it to the poor, paying for the spinning an extraordinary price. A short time before her death, she purchased, in secret, a quantity of wheat and rye, to be given to

the indigent in a time of scarcity: these stores remained unexhausted at her death, but were afterwards employed according to the original purpose.

Ballard's British Ladies—Biographium Fœmineum, &c.

ELIZABETH BURNET.

Elizabeth, eldest daughter of sir Richard Blake, knt. (of an ancient and respectable family), and of Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. Bathurst, a physician of eminence in London, was born November 8th, 1661. At eleven years of age she displayed a passion for theological enquiries, and read with great application the books that were put into her hands, which, falling short of the vivacity and sublimity of her conceptions, failed to satisfy her mind. Her friends, observing the effect produced by her studies, checked this presage of genius, by discouraging the confidence of the youthful philosopher in her own penetration and powers.

Having been educated in great privacy and retirement, she was, in her eighteenth year, married to Robert Berkley, of Spetchley, grandson of sir Robert Berkley, a judge during the reign of

Charles I. This connection was principally effected through the influence of Dr. Fell, bishop of Oxford, who was guardian to the young man, and entrusted with the care of his education. Dr. Fell was accustomed to declare, that the most essential service he had ever performed for his pupil, was in promoting his marriage with this lady.

Elizabeth, on coming into the family of her husband, found his mother, a woman of exemplary life, to be a zealous member of the church of Rome. This circumstance led her to attend more particularly to the subjects in dispute between the Catholics and the Reformers, that she might the better be enabled to guard herself and her husband against the arguments and insinuations of the Romish clergy. The mother of her husband, who was deserving of his respect, held great influence over his mind; a circumstance which rendered Elizabeth, whose penetration and sagacity were superior to her years, particularly careful and delicate to avoid any discussions or reflections which might tend to produce disgust, disturb the family harmony, or wound the feelings of either party. The discretion and good sense with which she conducted herself, in a situation thus critical, procured her just admiration,

and conciliated the esteem of the family of her husband. Her conduct is perhaps still more worthy of praise, since her moderation originated not in indifference to the subjects in dispute; but while tenacious of her own opinions, she judged properly, that their effects upon her character, her temper, and her manners, would not fail to prove their best recommendation. A residence in the country afforded her much leisure, which she improved by study and by exertions of benevolence. Books, the offices of devotion, the instruction of the poor, and the cares of her family, fully occupied and divided her time. Beloved and respected by all who surrounded her, six years thus glided away in studious and tranquil retirement.

During the reign of James, when the apprehensions of the Protestants daily received increase, Elizabeth prevailed on her husband, after the death of Dr. Fell, whose influence, opposed to that of the relations of Mr. Berkley, had hitherto kept him steady to his principles, to quit England and pass over to Holland. They accordingly made the tour of the Seventeen Provinces, in which, on account of their family and connections, they were received with distinguished kindness. Letters had, without their knowledge, been transmitted to Brussels, Ghent, and Liege, and

to the Catholics dispersed through the provinces, recommending Mrs. Berkley more particularly to their notice as a woman whose piety and virtues had, notwithstanding her errors, almost entitled her to the character of a saint. After their tour through the provinces, they fixed at the Hague, where, esteemed and caressed by persons of the first talents and rank, they continued to reside till the period of the revolution, when they returned to their native country, and their seat at Spetchley.

In this retreat Mrs. Berkley resumed her former manner of life, and improved hourly in every laudable acquirement. Her virtues and talents procured her the approbation and friendship of the most respectable persons of the country and times, among whom may be named Dr. Stillingfleet, bishop of Worcester; also the dean of that church, Dr. William Talbot, afterwards bishop of Durham: Dr. William Lloyd, the successor of bishop Stillingfleet, likewise treated her with singular marks of attention and respect. In 1693 she became a widow by the death of Mr. Berkley, who was interred with his ancestors at Spetchley.

During her widowhood, she prosecuted, with a more undivided attention, her former pursuits

and occupations, while to the protestant relations of her deceased husband she was a kind and beneficent patroness. Her income, which was liberal, and managed with strict economy, enabled her to gratify the benevolence of her heart. She kept at Spetchley an hospitable table, to which the neighbouring clergy were more particularly welcome: to those whose circumstances were narrow, she made presents of books, and even assisted them with loans of money, to be repaid when in their power, without taking for the debt any security. Mr. Berkley having in his will bequeathed a large sum of money, to be raised out of his estate, for the erection of an hospital at Worcester, his widow did all in her power towards its completion and establishment: beside which she took upon herself several charges, in relation to the affairs of her husband, beyond what was required of her by the laws, in the payment of debts and legacies. Having engaged Mr. Berkley, during his life-time, in the establishment of schools for the children of the poor, she devoted large sums after his decease towards their increase and perfection.

She had great facility with her pen, in which she took delight, and which she had early employed in various kinds of composition. It was

during her widowhood that she wrote the first sketch of a work, afterwards published under the title of "*A Method of Devotion.*" This performance, intended for her own use only, consisted of such principles and directions as she had adopted as the rules of her conduct. She remained a widow near seven years, when she gave her hand to Gilbert lord bishop of Salisbury, to whom she bore two children, who died in their infancy. The bishop had a family by a former marriage, who found in his second wife an affectionate and exemplary mother, and who returned her kindness and care in their education with that attachment and respect which were so justly her due.

The bishop, sensible of her interest in the welfare of his children, and confiding in her integrity and prudence, left his family, by will, under the sole care and authority of their step-mother: and further, to prove his sense of her value, and his trust in the rectitude of her principles, he settled upon herself, previous to their marriage, the whole of her own property and estates, binding himself to consent to whatever disposition of her fortunes she might, at her decease, think it just to make. The only use which Mrs. Burnet made of this liberality, after allowing a certain moderate sum for her board in the family, was to extend

the circle of her bounties. Having allotted for her own expences a fifth part of her income, which she rarely exceeded, she employed the remaining four fifths in acts of benevolence and mercy. Beside other charities, one hundred children were educated at her expence in and about Worcester and Salisbury.

By her second marriage the circle of her acquaintance was necessarily enlarged; persons of the first rank and merit courted her friendship; while she made use of her increasing influence and interest to extend her means of doing good. Amidst the various employments and duties which solicited and occupied her attention, she found leisure to continue the studies of her closet; and having completed the performance before alluded to, suffered herself to be prevailed upon, by the joint solicitations of her husband and her friends, to consent to its publication. The approbation which was bestowed upon the work induced her, after revising, improving, and adding to it from papers in her possession, to print a second edition, at her own expence, for the purpose of bestowing the copies among those whom she thought them likely to benefit or instruct. A third edition of this work was published after her death, under the following title, " A Method of Devotion: or,

Rules for holy and devout Living; with Prayers on several Occasions, and Advices and Devotions for the Holy Sacrament. Written by Mrs. Burnet, late wife of the right reverend father in God Gilbert lord bishop of Sarum. To which is added, some account of her life, by T. Goodwyn, archdeacon of Oxford, 8vo. Lond. 1713."

A constant journal was kept by Mrs. Burnet of her life; every evening she devoted some time to the recollection of the past day, with a view of avoiding in future any errors into which she might have fallen. Though without learning, she possessed an acute and active mind; theology continued to be her favourite study, to which, by the circumstances of the times and of her own situation, she had been more particularly led. She also made some progress in geometry and philosophy: but she valued knowledge as a *means* rather than as an *end*, as it had a tendency to enlarge and purify the mind. By the austerities of her piety, which was exalted to enthusiasm, she injured her constitution; but, in her zeal for speculative opinions, she never lost sight of candour and benevolence: she considered the regulation of her conduct and the purity of her life as the best evidence of the sincerity of her faith. Her general manners were unaffected, cheerful, and conciliat-

ing; severe to herself and candid to others. Without external pretence or ostentation, humility, modesty, and kindness, were her peculiar characteristics. In what was indifferent, she avoided singularity, and conformed with moderation and simplicity to the customs suited to her station and rank.

In 1707, her constitution, originally delicate, rapidly declining, she was recommended to the Spa for the recovery of her health, where she appeared in some degree to revive: but in January 1708, being seized with a pleuritic fever, she sunk under it. Her death was resigned as her life had been exemplary: she expired on the 3d of February, 1708-9, and was buried at Spetchley near her first husband, according to a promise made to him during his life.

Ballard's Ladies of Great Britain.—Biographium Fœmineum, &c.—Gibbon's Memoirs of Pious Women.

ELIZABETH BURY.

Elizabeth, daughter of captain Adams Lawrence of Lynton in Cambridgeshire, was born at Clare, in March, 1644. Her mother was the daughter of Henry Cutts, esq. of Clare. Eliza-

beth was first married to Griffith Lloyd, esq. of Hemmingford Grey, in Huntingdonshire, in February, 1667, a gentleman of respectable character, possessed of a good estate, and particularly esteemed for his integrity and activity in the commission of the peace. After living fifteen years happily with Mr. Lloyd, who died April 13th, 1682, she was left a widow, in which state she continued till 1697, when she espoused Mr. Samuel Bury, a dissenting minister. With this gentleman she resided in harmony and friendship, till 1720, when, after a short illness, she expired at Bristol, May 11th, in the seventy-seventh year of her age.

Mrs. Bury was greatly distinguished during her life for her talents and exemplary manners; she is said to have possessed uncommon quickness of apprehension and fluency of expression, a liberal curiosity, and great application. Her conversation was interesting, her mind acute, and her wit poignant: she excelled also in epistolary correspondence. Her studies were various and profound: philosophy, philology, history, ancient and modern, mathematics, geography, astronomy, and heraldry, by turns engaged her attention. Her hours of relaxation were employed in music, both vocal and instrumental. She was mistress

of the French language, and a generous benefactress to the French refugees. She particularly applied herself to the study of Hebrew, in which, by unwearied application and practice, she became a proficient. She wrote critical remarks upon the idioms and peculiarities of the Hebrew language, which were found among her papers after her decease. She likewise took delight in the study of anatomy and medicine, to which she was first led by her own indifferent health, and afterwards induced to cultivate by the desire of being useful to her neighbours. She frequently astonished professors in the science by her accurate method of stating difficult cases, the appropriate terms she made use of, and her scientific acquaintance with the subject. But her favourite pursuit was theology, in the subtleties of which she was critically conversant.

She was accustomed to regret the disadvantages of her sex, who, by the habits of their education, and the customs of society, were illiberally excluded from the means of acquiring knowledge. She contended, that mind was of no sex, and that man was no less an enemy to himself than to woman in confining her attention to frivolous attainments. She spoke with pleasure and gratitude of her own obligations to her father and to her

preceptors, for having risen superior to those unworthy prejudices, and opened to her the sources of intellectual enjoyment.

Her beneficence and generosity were habitual and persevering, and often exerted on an extensive scale; she made long and expensive journeys in the promotion of her various plans, and in procuring, to carry them into effect, the assistance and agency of others. 'I have acted the part of a beggar so long,' said she, 'that I am now almost one myself.' She recommended the appropriating of stated annual sums to benevolent purposes: 'People will not grudge,' she was accustomed to say, 'to give out of a purse that is no longer their own.' Those who had no children, she thought, ought to reserve a fourth part of their income for charitable uses. This, it must be confessed, is a subject of some difficulty, on which much might be alleged, and which must always depend on circumstances.

The temper of Mrs. Bury was contemplative and pious; from her early youth, she was accustomed to rise at four in the morning, and to spend several hours in her closet in meditation and devotional exercises. She conversed cheerfully with her friends, but regretted the time consumed in visits. She could not satisfy herself, she fre-

quently said, with an intercourse in which she could neither *do* nor receive *good*, but would rather confine herself to her closet and her books. In her diary the following remark sometimes occurs: —"Entertained very kindly at such and such houses, but no good done to myself or others." At other times, she would complain, after leaving company, 'that though she had struck fire frequently, it always fell upon wet tinder.' This good lady was probably too scrupulous and fastidious: among the lesser duties of life, we ought not to overlook, that of contributing, by innocent compliances, to the happiness of others. The bow cannot always remain bent; social duties are not inconsistent with moral obligations.

Mrs. Bury left at her decease a large diary, which was abridged and published by her husband, from whose account the preceding particulars have been extracted. Among her miscellaneous papers were several discourses upon religious subjects; also critical observations in anatomy, medicine, mathematics, music, philosophy, and rhetoric.

An elegy upon her death was written by Dr. Watts, in which her various and admirable qualities are poetically enumerated.

Ballard's British Ladies—Biographium Fœmineum Gibbon's Memoirs of Pious Women, &c.

CALPHURNIA.

THE two following letters of Pliny, translated by the earl of Orrery, afford an interesting description of this lady, whom he had espoused, and an affecting picture of virtuous tenderness.

PLINY TO HISPULLA *.

" As you are an example of every virtue, and as you tenderly loved your excellent brother, whose daughter (to whom you supplied the place of both parents) you considered as your own, I doubt not but you will rejoice to learn, that she proves worthy of her father, worthy of you, and worthy of her grandfather. She has great talents; she is an admirable economist; and she loves me with an entire affection: a sure sign of her chastity. To these qualities she unites a taste for literature, inspired by her tenderness for me. She has collected my works, which she reads perpetually, and even learns to repeat. When I am to plead, how great is the anxiety she suffers! When I have succeeded, her joy is not less exquisite. She engages people to tell her what applauses I have gained, what acclamations I have

* The aunt of Calphurnia.

excited, and what judgment is pronounced on my orations. When I am to speak in public she places herself as near to me as possible, under the cover of her veil, and listens with delight to the praises bestowed upon me. She sings my verses, and, untaught, adapts them to the lute:—*love* is her only instructor.

"Hence I expect with certainty that our happiness will be durable, and that it will daily increase. In me she is not captivated by youth or beauty, which are liable to accident and decay, but with the lustre of my name. These are the sentiments which become a woman formed by your hand, and instructed by your precepts. Under your roof, she beheld only purity and virtue; it was your approbation that taught her to love me. Your filial affection for my mother led you in my childhood to praise and model me, to presage that I should one day be the man my wife now fancies me to be. We, therefore, mutually return you thanks:—I, because you have given her to me;—she, because you have given me to her. You have selected us as formed for each other. Farewel."

PLINY TO CALPHURNIA.

"My eager desire to see you is incredible. *Love* is its first spring; the next, that we have

been so seldom separated. I pass the greater part of the night in thinking of you. In the day also, at those hours in which I have been accustomed to see you, my feet carry me spontaneously to your apartment, whence I constantly return out of humour and dejected, as if you had refused to admit me. There is one part of the day only that affords relief to my disquiet—the time dedicated to pleading the causes of my friends. Judge what a life mine must be, when labour is my rest, and when cares and perplexities are my only comforts. Adieu."

Biographium Fœmineum.

CALPURNIA.

CÆSAR, having been divorced from Pompeia, took, for his fourth wife, Calpurnia, daughter of Lucius Piso, of an ancient and honourable family, derived, according to Ovid, from Calpus, son to Numa Pompilius, second king of Rome. The family was divided into two branches; of which one was surnamed *Frugi*, signifying men of worth: the name of Piso was common to both. The father of Calpurnia was consul of Rome in

753; the year in which, by some writers, the birth of Christ is placed.

In Calpurnia, Cæsar found a wife such as he desired, the propriety of whose conduct preserved her even from suspicion. To her virtues were added beauty, talents, prudence, and an extraordinary eloquence; she possessed also a generosity, magnanimity, and greatness of mind, truly Roman. With a mind acute and comprehensive, she was enabled to enter into the great designs meditated by Cæsar, who aspired to universal empire. Calpurnia displayed both in adversity and in prosperity the same equanimity: the victories and triumphs of Cæsar inspired her with no presumption; while, in a reverse of fortunes, the firmness of her temper remained unshaken. Her mind was equal to her extraordinary fortune, and to the honours which she shared with the greatest monarch and conqueror in the world. Her modesty and moderation were, on all occasions, exemplary. No one could perceive any difference between Calpurnia wife to Cæsar senator of Rome, and Calpurnia consort to the master of the world. Mildness, gentleness, affability, and fortitude, were her distinguishing characteristics.

She exhibited the same steadiness when re-

publican Rome, impatient of its sovereign dictator, struggled to emancipate itself by the fall of the usurper. The destiny of Cæsar drew near to its accomplishment: his assassination was resolved upon; while his dearest friends joined in the conspiracy. Calpurnia, it is related, felt, on this occasion, presages of the approaching fate of her husband. Her imagination probably impressed by the spirit and circumstances of the times, she dreamed that, by a solemn decree of the senate, the dome built upon the house of Cæsar fell, and crushed him beneath it in her arms. Starting from this terrible vision, her tenderness for her husband, added to apprehensions but too justly founded, seized upon her spirits.

Cæsar had been warned of designs formed against his power and life by several anonymous advertisements, in which he was told to beware of *the ides of March*. He had on that day appointed to meet the senate for the business of proposing an expedition against the Parthians. The warnings he had received, the tears of Calpurnia, the entreaties of his friends, and an indisposition which he felt, combined to make him hesitate on the morning of the day, whether he should not adjourn the discussion and dismiss the assembly. To this purport he had even commis-

sioned Mark Antony, when Decimus Brutus came to inform him, that the senate, which had met in pursuance of his orders, waited only his arrival to declare him king of all the provinces of the empire, and to authorise his assumption of the ensigns of imperial dignity. On observing him waver in his resolution, Brutus ridiculed the superstitions by which he suffered himself to be influenced, and remonstrated with him on the impropriety of frustrating, by his weakness, the liberal purposes of the senate in his favour. Cæsar yielded to the representations of his insidious friend, bound, as he believed, to his interest by numberless acts of favour and liberality. On repairing to the senate, he met his fate, and perished, a victim to public liberty and private jealousy, by the hands of those in whom he had confided.

Calpurnia was seized, on the fatal tidings, with a deep and sincere grief, which was testified by the conduct of her future life. Superior to the weakness of ordinary minds, she pronounced publicly, in the *Rostra*, the funeral eulogium of her husband, in which her affection for the deceased, her sense of his great qualities, her respect for his memory, and her sorrow for his loss, were eloquently expressed and displayed. Having de-

clared, that a loss such as hers admitted of no reparation, in conformity to this sentiment, she passed the remainder of her life in mourning, secluded in the house of Mark Antony, to whom she entrusted the treasures and papers of Cæsar, that he might be the better enabled to avenge his death.

Lives of the Roman Empresses, by Monsieur de Serviez.

BIANCA CAPELLO.

Bianca, descended from the noble house of the Capelli at Venice, and daughter of Bartolomeo Capello, was born in 1545. Her childhood and early youth passed in the retirement of her father's palace, where, according to the custom of the country, she conversed only with her family and relations.

The Florentines had, among other nations, formed, in the middle of the sixteenth century, a commercial establishment at Venice, which was held in great reputation. By several of the most noble and wealthy families of Florence, agents were appointed at Venice, who transacted in the mercantile houses the business of their employers. Among the most distinguished of these was that

of the Salviati, whom Pietro Buonaventuri, a Florentine youth, whose birth was obscure, and whose family were indigent, served as a clerk. More indebted to nature than to fortune, Pietro, with a fine person and insinuating manners, possessed an aspiring temper, and a turn for intrigue.

Opposite to the palace of the Capelli was the house of the Salviati, when, in 1565, Bianca having entered her twentieth year, attracted, by the charms of her person, the attention of the young Florentine. Her rank flattered his ambition, while by the difficulties that seemed to threaten the intrigue, his darling passion for adventure was stimulated and inflamed. It was in vain that, for some time, he sought to procure access to the idol that had captivated his fancy, and banished from his thoughts the ledger and the cash-book. The young Venetian women, more especially those of noble blood, were held in strict confinement, which, by frustrating all his projects, had reduced Pietro to despair, but for some stolen glances, which his vanity failed not to construe to his advantage. His hopes thus revived, his efforts were renewed; while the confinement and severity under which Bianca repined, proved but too propitious to the views of her lover, and ren-

dered her little less solicitous than himself to facilitate the desired interview. Bolts and bars are but feeble obstacles when opposed to passion, which, ingenious to circumvent, and fertile in resource, bursts the trammels of authority, and overleaps, without difficulty, the barriers of external restraint.

The Florentine, who watched Bianca when, attended by her maid, she repaired to church, to offer up her devotions, prophaned the gates of the temple, by whispering in her ear an unhallowed tale: careful to veil his humble extraction, he represented himself to the credulous fair-one as a partner in the house whose concerns he transacted. His engaging manners, his elegant figure, the soft accents of the lover, and the novelty of her sensations, combined to deceive and intoxicate Bianca. Was *love* ever known to doubt the veracity of its object, or the reality of the sentiment which flattered its hopes? The attendant, influenced either by interest or by sympathy, by persuasions or by bribes, consented to aid the enamoured pair, and, by the help of a false key, to admit, at midnight, while caution slept, the lover to breathe his vows at the feet of his mistress.

This intercourse was maintained, for some months, without discovery; the secret rested in

the breasts of three people, whose mutual interest and safety was the pledge of their prudence: but symptoms of the appearance of a fourth personage, whose silence it would be less easy to ensure, placed at length before the eyes of the frail Bianca the terrors of a cloister and perpetual imprisonment. In this dilemma a consultation being held, flight was proposed, as the only means of safety. Bianca yielded to the reasoning of her lover, and, having secured as a dowry a set of jewels belonging to her father, eloped with him to Florence.

During the journey, Buonaventuri was compelled to disclose the deception he had practised; to excuse it as a stratagem of love, and to reveal to his mistress, on whose tenderness he threw himself for pardon, his real name and quality. Thus circumstanced, the lady, as he foresaw, had no alternative, but was compelled to recompense with her hand, and to promise faith and affection to the man by whom she had been so grossly deceived and betrayed. A priest, procured by the Florentine, in a village near Bologna, performed for the lovers the nuptial ceremony; when, the benediction being given, the new-married pair proceeded to Florence, and sought shelter in the

house of the elder Buonaventuri. Bianca soon after gave birth to a daughter, on whom she bestowed the name of Pelegrina.

The Capelli family, incensed at the flight and disgrace of their daughter, breathed only vengeance: Grimani, patriarch of Aquileia, the uncle of Bianca, procured, in his wrath, a decree from the senate, by which his neice and her husband were exiled, as outlaws, from Venice, and a reward of a thousand ducats offered to those who should bring the offenders to justice: a similar sum was, on a fulfilment of the same condition, promised by Bartolomeo. Giovan Battista Buonaventuri, uncle to Pietro, accused of being privy to the conduct of his nephew, was thrown into a dungeon and suffered to perish: the confidant of the lovers, whom they had neglected to make the partner of their flight, expiated her breach of trust by a fate not less severe. Thus, from the imprudence of two young people, whose age afforded some extenuation for their offences, and by the absurd prejudices of a fanatic aristocracy, was humanity violated and nature outraged.

Bianca, the victim of credulity and fraud, continued for a time concealed at Florence, in the house of the father of her husband, where she learned with terror the proceedings at Venice,

the barbarity of her relations, and the injustice of her country. Ruffians, it was reported, were sent to Florence to drag her from her humble asylum; every thing tended to convince her of the dangers of her situation, and the necessity of a powerful friend. Thus circumstanced, she determined to solicit protection from Francesco (son to Cosmo), governor of Tuscany. Her introduction to this prince is variously related. Francesco had received from his agents at Venice early notice of the elopement, with its consequences; and, in the ensuing year, he appeared a zealous advocate in behalf of the lady. The following account of the commencement of the acquaintance between Bianco and the governor wears an air of romance, and seems to want confirmation. The story is however admitted and reported by the Florentine writers.

Bianca is represented, in dread of the decree, as keeping herself closely concealed in the house of her father-in-law, scarcely venturing to hear mass in a neighbouring church, when a disturbance in the street one day drew her, at the moment Francesco passed on horseback, towards the window. Absorbed in attention to what had caused the affray, she saw not the prince, who, struck by her beauty, stopped to observe her: on

meeting, at length, his ardent gaze, she started, retired in alarm, and reported what had passed to the mother of her husband, who sought to dissipate her fears. Some time elapsed, when the incident appearing to be followed by no consequences, Bianca recovered her tranquillity: she however redoubled her precautions, abstained wholly from mass, and kept herself in strict concealment.

Francesco, whose imagination the charms of Bianca had deeply impressed, rode daily through the street, in which he had transiently beheld her, watching in vain for a second glance: in the same hope, and with the same success, he visited the neighbouring churches. Thus baffled, and despairing of the assistance of chance, he imparted his adventure, in confidence, to his chamberlain, Mondragone, who, with the aid of his wife, traced the beautiful stranger. The wife of Mondragone, under plausible pretences, formed an acquaintance with the mother of Buonaventuri, and, by her liberalities, won her confidence. The story of the marriage of Bianca, its consequences, her just apprehensions, and the necessity of a powerful patronage, soon became the subject of their conversations. The lady of the chamberlain, of course, offered her interest with her

husband, to procure for the beautiful Venetian the protection of the prince, whose justice and clemency she failed not to extol. Induced by the solicitations and arguments of her mother, on whom the wife of Mondragone had imposed without difficulty, Bianca was prevailed upon to give a timid assent to make a visit to the house of the chamberlain, where they were received with courtesy by their new friends, and the young lady persuaded to recapitulate her story. Her hostess listened to the tale with apparent interest, and, on its conclusion, having praised the munificence and liberality of the prince, promised to engage his patronage for her lovely guest. After partaking some refreshments, the mother was artfully drawn from the room, which Francesco, a few minutes after, abruptly entered. Bianca, confused by an incident thus unexpected, sunk at the feet of the royal visitor, and, in tremulous accents, besought his honour and compassion. Francesco, having raised and encouraged the lovely suppliant, assured her of his services and protection; after which he immediately withdrew, leaving Bianca not less perplexed than surprised by what had happened. The lady of the house, on her return, accosting her guest with a smile, apologised

for the intrusion of the prince, who, possessing the key to a private door of the house, was accustomed, she told her, to enter without ceremony. 'But doubtless,' added she, 'you chid him for his intrusion.' 'I asked of him,' replied Bianca, 'only security for my honour.' The occasion was not lost for renewing the eulogium on Francesco, a subject on which the wife of the chamberlain was peculiarly eloquent: she entreated her guest not to check an acquaintance thus auspiciously, though accidentally, begun, and which could not fail of proving to her highly advantageous. Such is said to have been the origin of a connection so important to the future destiny of Bianca.

This account is liable to objections: it appears improbable that the prince, who learned from his agents, at the time it happened, the flight of the lovers, should have been ignorant of the circumstances attending their asylum, and the conduct of the Venetian states, or should have been obliged for his introduction to stratagem and surprise. But a foundation of truth, enough for the purposes of this narration, is sufficiently apparent in the charms and defenceless situation of Bianca, the character in which her husband stood, as an

agent for the commerce of Florence, and the temper of Francesco, whose sensibility to female beauty was well known.

The prince espoused, with ardor and spirit, the cause of the fair fugitive, in whose behalf he negociated with the Venetians, seeking to obtain, through his agent at Venice, and by the mediation of the pope's nuncio, a reverse of their severe decree. Though sustained by the church, his efforts proved fruitless, the council of ten continued inexorable. Six thousand ducats, the property of Bianca, bequeathed to her by her mother, were withheld, and the decree, which pronounced her an alien from her country, confirmed. So rigid and implacable appeared the temper of the republic, that Francesco was advised by his agent to remit his efforts, till an opportunity more propitious should occur, when, the affair being no longer recent, aristocratical vengeance might have time to cool. A general interest, he assured him, had been excited by the cause; the states conceiving their dignity, as a body, to be affected; to relent, therefore, would be considered as a dangerous precedent. To these remonstrances a hint was added, that it ill became the dignity of an embassador and representative of the prince to interfere in the con-

cerns of a private family, in a business which promised not a favourable issue, which was disreputable to its advocates, and which would not fail to draw upon Florence the resentment of the republic. Francesco, on this statement, seems to have relaxed his zeal; the proceedings were suffered to decline; the rather perhaps as Bianca, under his protection, remained in perfect security. It is certain that, in 1565, every application to the senate in her behalf had ceased.

The prince, who daily became more attached to his protegée, purchased for her a palace on the *Via Maggiore* at Florence; his liberalities towards her were boundless; while every interval from business was devoted to her society. Bianca was not insensible to the attentions of her munificent patron, though for some years a veil of decorum and secresy was drawn over their connection.

At the commencement of their acquaintance, Francesco had been invested by his father, who had retired from public affairs, with the greater part of the ducal powers; Cosmo, though not ignorant of the conduct of his son towards his new favourite, affected to overlook it; an alliance was negociated by him, between Francesco, the reigning duke of Tuscany, and the emperor Maximilian, whose sister, Donna Joanna of Aus-

tria, had been demanded in marriage. The Italian princes, involved in a struggle for precedence, regarded with jealousy the power and magnificence of the Medici; the interest of the house of Austria, it was conceived by Cosmo, would strengthen their cause, and enable them to defeat the machinations of their enemies. In a political view, Francesco acceded to the opinions of his father, nor ventured, though but little inclined to the marriage, to throw any impediment in the way of the negociation. While this alliance remained in suspence, the attachment of the prince to Bianca was studiously concealed; but, on the completion of the nuptials, he no longer affected to disguise his feelings.

In 1566, a short time after the marriage, Bianca was introduced at court, and the predeliction of her lover openly avowed. Intoxicated by the admiration and respect procured to her by her charms, and the favour of the duke, whose devotion to her appeared to be unlimited, she carried her views into futurity, and revolved in her mind projects the most aspiring. Francesco, in a moment of delirium, made a solemn vow, before the image of the virgin, to espouse his mistress whenever they should be freed from their present engagements.

While Bianca triumphed in the favour of the duke, her husband shared in his bounty; invested with the title and office of chamberlain, he was admitted to a part in the government, and consulted on the affairs of the state. Giddy with his elevation, he abused the powers entrusted to him, and drew on himself the hatred of the people. The Florentines had not yet forgotten the usurpations of the Medici, by whom the republic had been abolished: a number of malecontents still remained, who waited but an occasion, openly to shew the detestation which lurked in their hearts of the masters imposed upon them. Francesco, who, without the good qualities, inherited the vices of his father, was still more the object of their abhorrence: while, incensed at the oppression and arrogance of the upstart chamberlain, they meditated his ruin, which his own indiscretion precipitated.

In consequence of her connection with the prince, a coldness had taken place between Bianca and her husband, whose intriguing spirit reviving, he sought to console himself for the infidelity of his wife in gallantries with the ladies of the court. Buonaventuri particularly attached himself to Cassandra Bongiani, a beautiful Florentine, of the family of the Ricci; with this lady, whose favours he imprudently boasted, he passed his

hours of leisure from the business of his office. The Ricci, zealous for the honour of their family, and irritated by the vanity and presumption of Buonaventuri, complained to the duke, whom they entreated to chastise the insolence of his chamberlain. In compliance with this remonstrance, Francesco mildly represented to him the impropriety of his conduct, warned him of his danger, and advised him to greater moderation and reserve; concluding with a hint, that his protection could but little avail him against the poniard of the assassin. The chamberlain excused and justified himself, complained vehemently of the malice of his enemies, and treated the imputations thrown on him as calumnies, fabricated by his enemies, from jealousy of the favour with which he was honoured by his master. Francesco affected to admit these apologies, but observed, on dismissing Buonaventuri, that, for the consequences of his conduct, he would henceforth have himself only to blame.

The imprudent chamberlain, confiding in the forbearance of his patron, repeated, with aggravation, his indiscretions; while the Ricci continued daily to solicit the duke for justice. To rid himself of their importunities, and to save his chamberlain, he at length determined on sending him

to France. Bianca, to whom he communicated this project, felt, on the idea of a separation from her husband, her regard for him revive: imploring the prince to suspend his purpose, she promised to use all her influence with Buonaventuri to induce him to alter his conduct. On the same day, she remonstrated with him on the peril to which he exposed himself; repeated what had passed between herself and the duke; and entreated him with tears to dissolve the connection in which he was entangled. She was answered by her husband with rudeness and violence; he refused with imprecations to make the sacrifice required of him; and, after treating his wife with insult and menace, left her overwhelmed with indignities and grief. Francesco, in an adjoining apartment, to which he had communication by a secret door, overheard the conversation; and found, on entering, his mistress in tears. 'If,' said he, after exhorting her to compose herself, 'your husband will take no advice, we must leave him to his fate.'

Buonaventuri, rushing into the street, after he had quitted his wife, observed one of the Ricci, who was engaged in conversation with two other noblemen: having furiously accosted him, he applied a pistol to his breast, and, in terms of out-

rage, threatened his destruction, should he dare again to complain of his conduct. Ricci, justly incensed at this new insult, repaired again with his friends to the duke, of whom he demanded immediate satisfaction for the affront he had received. Francesco, taking him into the garden, held with him a long conversation, and, on parting, was heard to say, 'Do as you please, I shall take no notice of your conduct.' In the evening the duke quitted the city.

The chamberlain returning on the night of the same day (December 21st, 1569), attended by two servants armed, from the house of Cassandra, was attacked on the bridge *Della Ininita*, by more than twelve banditti: the combat was unequal; in the beginning of the fray, one of the servants made his escape, the other fell by his master. Buonaventuri, having killed the leader of the assassins, defended himself with vigour, cleared the bridge, and had nearly reached his house, where a fresh band of assassins awaited him, so intent were his enemies on his destruction: exhausted at length by his exertions, and unable to evade assailants thus multiplied, the impetuous chamberlain rushed on his fate, and fell covered with wounds. Ruffians, at the same time, broke into the chamber of his mistress, whom they murdered in her bed. By

these barbarous sacrifices was the ferocious honour of the Ricci appeased.

Bianca, informed in the morning of the miserable destiny of her husband, flew to the palace, to implore vengeance on the murderers. The duke was still absent, at Pratolino, whither he had retired, and whence he returned not till the second day after the catastrophe, when he endeavoured to console Bianca by a solemn promise to investigate the transaction, and to punish the assassins of his chamberlain. By tardy proceedings, however, the murderers were suffered to escape, and take refuge in France. This circumstance rendered the prince suspected of being privy to the outrage, an opinion which other events tended to strengthen; and which was, some years afterwards, confirmed by his own confession, to Giovan Battista Confetti, his chaplain. Too weak to risque offending his mistress, by a removal of her husband, whose stay she had solicited, without energy to punish the presumption of the creature whom he had raised, or resolution to refuse redress to an injured subject, there remained to Francesco no other alternative. To these, it is probable, private motives might be added of sufficient force to precipitate the fate of a capricious though complaisant husband.

The death of Buonaventuri appeared to draw yet closer the ties between his widow and the duke, whose avowed mistress Bianca now became, and from whom he could scarcely separate himself for the necessary avocations of his station. The Florentines, offended and disgusted with the conduct of their governor, circulated, at his expence, severe satires; but the influence of Bianca was not to be shaken: all favours were solicited through the medium of her interest; her support was fortune, and her displeasure ruin. It was scarcely possible that a power thus absolute should be always used with moderation; and it is certain that Bianca incurred the hatred of the nation. Alarmed by the public discontent, she courted, to strengthen her interest, the friendship of the Medici. Cosmo, father of the reigning duke, lived retired with Camilla Martelli, the wife whom he had espoused, and interested himself but little with public affairs. Donna Isabella de Medici, sister to Francesco, and his brother, cardinal Ferdinand, appeared to Bianca of greater importance to her cause. Isabella, beloved by her brother, but unfortunately married to Giordano Orsino, with whose nephew, Troilo, she had formed an attachment, which ultimately led her to a tragical death, finding her inclinations favoured by

Bianca, attached herself to her in return, nor did she fail to flatter the passion of the duke. Cardinal Ferdinando, whose temper was rough and severe, though but little beloved or confided in by Francesco, had, of all the Medici family, the greatest popularity. His favour was sought by Bianca as a security against the people, while, to effect her purpose, she studied his character, and contrived to render herself necessary to him, through his love of pomp and expence, which led him to exceed the limits of his fortune. Having repeatedly applied to the duke for an increase of his revenue, or a temporary relief from his exigences, Ferdinando had as often suffered the mortification of a refusal. The interests of the brothers clashed with each other: Bianca, availing herself of this circumstance, obtained for the cardinal, by her interference, what he had before vainly sought. One day, in particular, when about to depart for Rome, he pressed the duke for a loan of twenty thousand scudi; and, on the rejection of his suit, complained to Bianca of the conduct of his brother: she exhorted him, with a smile, to patience, and assured him, that, on his return home, he would find his wishes fulfilled. Ferdinando, encouraged by this promise, was, on his arrival at Rome, agreeably surprised

by the sum he had demanded. To these substantial services, Bianca added the most flattering testimonies of respect and deference: mistress of every avenue to the heart, the cold and severe nature of the cardinal yielded to her blandishments; while soliciting his advice, his assistance, and his prayers, to him she affected to hold herself indebted for the distinctions she enjoyed in his family.

Her influence with the Medici thus secured, her ascendancy at court rested on a solid basis. To personal charms, she added an address the most insinuating; pleasure followed in her train, while distrust and jealousy fled before her. Francesco, unhappy in his marriage, and at variance with his kindred, sought refuge in the vivacity and facility of his mistress. The grand-duchess, educated in a bigotted court, harsh and unyielding in her manners, narrow in her intellects, and rigid in her opinions, was little calculated to engage an alienated heart. Severe to the frailties of her husband, she embittered his mind by reproaches, and by her incessant complaints and appeals to his father completed his aversion and disgust. By her jealousy, her severity, and her violence, the indifference of her husband was converted into hatred; and the chains rivetted which bound him

to her rival. The example of the duke was of course followed by the court; while adulation and splendor surrounded Bianca, the unfortunate duchess sunk into neglect. Exasperated by the consequences of her own indiscretion, she redoubled her importunities, her appeals, and her complaints; till irritated by her deserted state, the unhappy Joanna felt herself one day, on accidentally meeting her husband, with his mistress, on the bridge of *La Trinita*, roused to fury and revenge. Count Heliodoro Costelli, by whom she was attended, observing her emotion, and that she was about to give orders to her servants to throw into the Arno her hated rival, stepped forward, at the critical moment, and by representing her purpose as a suggestion of the devil, dissuaded her from so desperate a measure. The dictates of vengeance yielding to those of superstition, the duchess recalled her half-delivered mandate, and the favourite passed on in safety. Not long after this incident, Bianca contrived, by her address, to mitigate even the rage of her rival, and, for a time, to obtain from her some marks of favour.

In 1574, the death of Cosmo, which secured the sovereignty to Francesco, removed from the conduct of his mistress a watchful eye, and determined her on the execution of a long-meditated

project. The grand-duchess had borne to the duke several daughters: averse to the succession of either of his brothers, the want of a son afforded to Francesco a perpetual source of vexation and grief. Since nature had refused him a legitimate heir, he had been frequently heard to express a wish, that he might, out of wedlock, enjoy the satisfaction of being father to a boy. To secure her power over her lover, Bianca earnestly desired to become a mother, since Francesco, to the promise of making her his wife, should it ever be in his power, had added as a condition, that she should first present him with a son. One obstacle to her elevation had been removed by the assassination of her husband; while the declining health of the duchess seemed to promise, at no very distant period, the completion of her hopes: by these circumstances her ingenuity was stimulated. Since the birth of her daughter Pelegrina, the pledge of her first attachment, dissipation had impaired her constitution, and rendered a future pregnancy but little probable. The efficacy of medicine, of every nostrum and superstition, which the knowledge or the temper of the times afforded, had been long resorted to by Bianca in vain; when, despairing of success, she resolved to have recourse to subtilty and fraud. An ha-

bitual refinement and policy, aided by the court morality, in which she had become an adept, determined her, in the prosecution of her purpose, to shrink from no measures which might ensure success. A project had been for some time ripening in her mind, and the agents, whose assistance it would be requisite to procure, chosen and marked out. To each individual *his* part, of which only he had knowledge, was assigned; the entire scheme was entrusted but to the confidant and attendant of Bianca, Joanna-Santi, by whom the *whole* was to be arranged and conducted. In conformity to the plan of her mistress, Santi selected several Florentine women who were in a state of pregnancy, and at the close of the year 1575 every thing was in a train of preparation.

A report was now industriously circulated that the favourite had become pregnant: no one appeared to doubt of her situation, so admirably did Bianca perform her part; while the transport of her lover was sincere and unbounded. August 29th, 1576, one of the women, marked by the confidant, was delivered of a son, and the mother, with the child, conveyed to a house belonging to Bianca. Santi, making the woman a visit, took the infant, under pretence of shewing it to some person in an adjoining room, from its mother,

and, in the night, had it secretly conveyed to the palace of Bianca, to be produced as occasion should serve. The crafty Venetian had acted through the day the part of a woman in the pains of child-birth: the duke, full of anxiety, and impatiently expecting her delivery, quitted not the room for a moment, till, at length, exhausted by fatigue and watching, the night being far advanced, he was prevailed on to retire, and to leave his beloved mistress with her nurses and attendants. Bianca contrived, on some pretence, to rid herself, for a few moments, of the physician, who waited in her chamber, and who seems not to have been in the plot; and in the interval, surrounded only by her confidential friends, pretended to have brought forth a son. Francesco, who had just laid down to repose, hastened, on the joyful intelligence, to the chamber of his mistress, from whose arms he received the boy, which he acknowledged as his own: in compliment to saint Anthony, whom he believed had been propitious to the prayers of Bianca, the child received from the duke the name of Antonio.

Thus successful in fraud, cruelty succeeded in the mind of the ambitious Venetian, who sought to rid herself of the witnesses of her falsehood. The real mother, ignorant of the fate of her in-

fant, was, by an agent in the interest of Bianca, conveyed to Bologna. This man, being some time afterwards at the point of death, revealed to her the mystery, and cautioned her to be mindful of her safety. She wandered, in consequence of this event, under a feigned name, during twelve years, through Italy; and, after the decease of Bianca, revealed the transaction, in confession, to a Bolognese priest, whose interest she requested, with the successor of Francesco, to enable her to return to Florence.

The wet-nurse, with a waiting woman, conscious to a part of the secret, were precipitated into the Arno; while Santi, the confidant and principal agent, was, a year after the transaction, sent to Bologna, and, on her passage over the Apennines, assaulted by ruffians, from whom she received several wounds with musket shot. Having, notwithstanding, reached the city alive, she made, in revenge, an authentic declaration of the whole transaction, of the fate which had overtaken those who had been employed in it, and of her belief that her own assassination had been intended.

The timidity of conscious guilt is ever cruel; thus the barbarity of Bianca defeated its own purpopose: by a deviation from integrity, the mind

becomes bewildered in error, while the desperate measures suggested by increasing perplexity, lead but the more certainly to detection and shame.

The deposition of Santi was forwarded to cardinal Ferdinando, who, for political reasons, made no present use of it. The artifices of Bianca had not been sufficiently subtle to elude the suspicions of her physician; her part was probably overacted; some of the symptoms which she had exhibited of a woman in child-birth, had an appearance not perfectly in nature: the doubts of the medical men were even whispered in the ear of the grand-duke, accompanied by other reports of the deceptions that had been practised. Francesco seemed to give no credit to the tale; choosing rather to believe what flattered his wishes, without a too curious investigation of the truth, he publicly acknowledged the little Antonio as his son.

Bianca omitted nothing, on her part, that might tend to endear the boy to his reputed father: when scarcely two years of age, she made him write, or wrote for him, letters to the duke, which are yet in the archives of Florence. It was scarcely possible that she should long remain ignorant of the reports of her falsehood, which had been carried to her lover: conscious that the

fraud could not be eventually concealed, she had the temerity, some years afterwards, to confess to the duke the whole affair. Thus was the secret disclosed that had cost so many precautions and so much blood. In the midst of her avowal of guilt, Bianca preserved, by her address, the attachment of the infatuated prince, who, before the public, still persisted in owning the child. The depositions of the real mother, and of the confidant, are not the only evidence of this singular transaction: to these were added the testimony of Pietro Capello, the physician, who attended Bianca during her pretended pregnancy and delivery, and who avowed to the duke his suspicions; while the confession of Bianca herself, and the subsequent communications of Francesco to his confessor, which are authenticated facts, remove every remaining doubt. If Fernando preserved silence in an affair that so nearly concerned his interest, the enmity between the brothers, the good offices of Bianca, her ascendancy over her lover, with other prudential motives, sufficiently account for his moderation.

About this period, 1576, the father of Bianca, whose resentment time, and the splendid destiny of his daughter, had combined to appease, visited her at Florence: the grand-duke overwhelmed

him with presents, while Bianca purchased for him a house at Venice, and increased his yearly revenue. The family of Bartolomeo, more noble than wealthy, was, on this occasion, regarded with jealousy by the senate, whose decree was still in force against Bianca: displeased with the conduct of her father, though they still allowed him to attend the grand council, he was never afterwards admitted to the senate. His daughter's residence and connections in a foreign court, were, to a jealous aristocracy, a sufficient ground of distrust.

The duke, involved by his love for his mistress in so much scandal and perplexity, was at this time exposed, on her account, to serious apprehensions. The arch-duchess had, since the birth of Antonio, reiterated her appeals to her brother, Maximilian II.; who no longer refused to listen to her complaints. Ferdinand, the arch-duke, brother to the emperor, and an enemy to Francesco, interested himself also in the distress of the neglected duchess; while he sought to render odious the conduct of her husband in the eyes of the German princes. Francesco was menaced by Ferdinand, who talked loudly of redressing or avenging his sister. A rupture between the states appeared to be inevitable, when the death of

Maximilian dispersed the gathering storm. Rudolph, his successor, whose interest inclined him to keep terms with the duke, having ordered the case to be laid before him, listened to the grievances of both parties, and appeared bent on conciliating measures. The avarice of her husband, and his predeliction for her rival, were vehemently urged by the grand-duchess; while the duke, in his turn, accused his wife of austerity and profusion. The emperor earnestly recommended an accommodation; and advised Francesco to sacrifice his mistress, and to treat his wife, who deserved from him more consideration, with greater respect. The duke, refusing to relinquish Bianca, reproached the duchess with violence and exaggeration. From this negociation, as might have been foreseen, nothing resulted.

In 1577, an event happened more auspicious to the cause of the injured wife; the grand-duchess, in giving birth to a son, presented her consort with a male heir, so long and so ardently desired by Francesco. Don Filippo de Medici (the name given to the child) seemed to conciliate the alienated feelings of his parents. All Florence triumphed in the event, and clamoured for the removal and disgrace of the mistress. Bianca, to avoid greater mortification, prudently withdrew

for a time from the city, and retiring either to her villa, or to Bologna, affected to relinquish her connection with the prince.

Her absence but added strength to the affection of her lover: habituated to her cheerful and complaisant tenderness; originally averse to a wife forced upon him, whose behaviour had not tended to soften his distaste; abhorring the constraint which her present situation, and the wishes of the people, imposed upon him; he languished for the society of his mistress, in which he yet at times secretly indulged. In the ensuing year Bianca returned to Florence, though still affecting to live retired. Appeased by her exterior prudence, and persuaded of the reformation of her husband, the duchess treated her rival with less acrimony: but it was not long before this unfortunate woman became, with embitterred grief and resentment, undeceived. Having one day encountered her husband with her rival, she reproached her, it is said, with bitterness, and menaced her with the justice of Heaven: on her return home, agitated and dejected, a profound melancholy seized her, accompanied by an indisposition, which terminated in her death. This catastrophe was by some attributed to the consequences of a fall during her pregnancy; by others to poison administered to

her by the duke; but a heart sincerely wounded, with an infirm constitution, seems fully adequate to produce the effect.

Francesco, callous and impolitic, exhibited on this occasion no symptoms of grief or compunction: while attending the solemnities of the funeral of his wife, he disgusted the Florentines, by whom the duchess had been pitied and beloved, with his levity and indecorum. Bianca shewed, on the death of her rival, so little sensibility and delicacy, as to behold from her window the burial cavalcade: it was also observed, that the duke in passing by, looked up and saluted his mistress; while from the interment he proceeded immediately to a route at her house. The triumph of Bianca on the decease of the duchess was ungenerous, indecent, and disgusting. 'Give me your hand,' said she, to one of her confidants, who brought her the intelligence; 'it will now be in my power to make your fortune.—I have the promise of the duke to become his wife: my views are all accomplished.' These hopes grew into conviction, when Francesco refused to listen to proposals made to him of an alliance with the daughter of another sovereign prince. After the death of the duchess, the cardinal in vain pressed upon his brother several advantageous marriages. The duke con-

stantly replying, 'that he had already sufficiently sacrificed to the interest of his family; and that he had determined never again to barter his liberty for matrimonial fetters.'

In the pursuit of her favourite purpose, Bianca had yet formidable obstacles to combat and vanquish. By the Florentines, attached to the memory of the grand-duchess, she was detested; to Francesco, her enemies represented her as an impostor; by a marriage with the rival of his late wife, the duke would incur the enmity of the house of Austria, her relations; his ministers and ecclesiastics pressed him to burst the chain by which he had been so long dishonoured and bound. Urged by motives thus pressing and various, his own inclinations seemed to waver. His spiritual and temporal counsellors, whom the duke consulted upon the propriety of fulfilling his engagements with Bianca, unanimously absolved him from his vow: his chaplain and confessor, Giovanni Confletti, especially pressed upon him the more important duties he owed to himself, his country, and his family; duties which it rather behoved him to fulfil; and enforced his opinion by arguments drawn from reason, from religion, and from the laws. Francesco, overcome by considerations which on all sides assailed him, determined on

doing violence to his heart, and yielding to the wishes of his counsellors and people. As some compensation to his mistress, who, on hearing his resolution, had, he was informed, refused all nourishment, fallen sick and taken to her bed, he purposed to legitimate the child she had adopted; a measure which his confessor opposed, as replete with impropriety and injustice. The duke, allowing himself to be convinced that he had no right to deprive his brothers of their title to the succession, was prevailed on at length to abandon his plan, and content himself with the determination of securing to the young Antonio a large and independent revenue. His counsellors, to secure their victory over the inclinations of their prince, and wholly to wean him from his mistress, advised him to quit Florence, for a time, and to travel through Tuscany.

Notwithstanding the opposition of Bianca, the duke commenced a journey, so perilous to her hopes: during his absence, she availed herself of her pen, varying her style, and addressing herself, alternately, to his honour, his conscience, his generosity, and his heart. Affecting to submit to her destiny, she seemed preparing to leave Florence, but delayed her departure under various pretences. Having, by her agents, prepared the

way for a last effort to move him in her favour, she suddenly appeared, on his return, in the presence of Francesco. Bathed in tears, and humbled at his feet, her pathetic eloquence triumphed without difficulty over the heart of her lover; prudence and precaution were suddenly put to flight, and divines and politicians remembered no more; the dictates of state, and the suggestions of interest, were silenced by the louder and more persuasive voice of nature and reason, vanquished by habit and passion. The remaining scruples of the duke yielded to the suggestions of a monk in the interest of Bianca. Apartments were prepared in the ducal palace for the reception of the conquering Venetian, and the attachment of the lovers renewed and cemented. A fit of sickness which Francesco suffered about this time, completed the victory of Bianca, whose tender cares endeared her to the heart of the prince, by a thousand new and affecting ties.

On the morning of the 5th of June, 1579, Bianca, entering the chamber of the duke, offered him refreshments, which she pressed him to take: on his declining them, alleging his want of appetite—'I pray you,' said his tender nurse, 'accept this egg from me; I am convinced it will do you good.' The prince, having complied,

declared that he felt himself revived, and, expressing his grateful sense of the cares of Bianca, added, 'I have long been your debtor, it is just that I should make the recompence your kindness and affection deserve. Take my hand; from this moment you are my wife.' On the same day they were secretly married by Bianca's friendly monk. During the term of mourning for the grand-duchess, this event was carefully concealed: as a pretence to lodge Bianca in the palace, it was reported, that she had been appointed governess to the young princesses. Francesco employed agents to procure the opinion of the king of Spain, whose concurrence he considered as important, on the measure he had adopted: having obtained this sanction, he avowed, at the expiration of the term of mourning, his marriage.

Cardinal Ferdinando was not apprised of these nuptials till the middle of the year 1579: he received the intelligence, which he had long been prepared to expect, with little emotion. During the sickness of his brother he had been at Florence; had witnessed the attentions of Bianca; and, it is even reported, had received from Francesco himself an intimation of the step he had taken. Ferdinando, however averse to this union, prudently forbore an opposition that, without being

availing, might have been injurious to himself: he foresaw not the future elevation of Bianca; his father, Cosmo, had contracted an inferior alliance with Camilla Martelli, without thinking of raising his wife to the dignity of grand-duchess. In a letter to a friend on this subject, he thus expressed himself: "However, it does not follow that Bianca will be proclaimed grand-duchess. I rather believe she will hold the same rank as did signora Camilla." With this conviction, he appeared to regard the event with tranquillity, even congratulating his brother upon the occasion.

To cover the disgrace of this connection, and to conciliate the public mind, Francesco applied to the Venetian senate, entreating it to confer upon his wife the title of daughter of the republic; a title created by the Venetians for political purposes, by which the daughters of their patricians, assuming the rank of princesses, might form alliances with crowned heads. A daughter of the republic of Venice, the first Italian state, took precedence of the other princesses of Italy. Abbioso, the agent of the duke at Venice, prepared the business: the negociation previously arranged, Mario Sforza, the duke's general, bearing letters from Francesco and Bianca, conducted a splendid embassy to the republic, and obtained

from the senate, to whom the marriage was announced in form, the dignity solicited.

On the 17th of July, 1579, Bianca was, by a decree of the same senate by which she had been banished and persecuted, created daughter of the republic. At the same time, her father and brother were made knights of the *Stola d'Oro*. Splendid entertainments were given to the embassador, who returned to Florence laden with honours, and bearing a letter to his master, in which the doge congratulated him upon his nuptials, thanked him for the attachment he had manifested to Venice, in his choice of a consort from one of the most illustrious of their patrician families, and expressed his satisfaction in the event, of which an honourable monument should be left to posterity: "for which purpose," adds he, "we have this day unanimously, in council, created and proclaimed Bianca Capello, grand-duchess of Tuscany, daughter of the republic, &c."

Francesco, gratified by the conduct of the Venetians, deputed his foster-brother, don Giovanni de Medici, a youth of twelve years of age, to return his solemn acknowledgments to the senate. Giovanni was received and treated at Venice as a sovereign prince. It was yet doubted, notwithstanding the splendor of these embassies, if Bianca

would be raised to the ducal throne, which seemed not, at the time of his marriage, to have been the purpose of the duke. Francesco, in his letter, had informed the doge of his nuptials, calling Bianca his wife, without allusion to any higher title. Nor was it mentioned in the letter of Bianca, which was sealed, not with the arms of the Medici, but with her own crest. If the doge, in his answers, gave to Bianca the title of grand-duchess, it was because he affected to believe, that the title of daughter of the republic, by raising her to the rank of a princess, gave her a claim to the ducal throne. This circumstance, which implied the wishes and expectations of the senate, with the honours lavished on the embassadors, aided in determining Francesco on the elevation of his wife.

A measure so flattering to the ambition of Bianca being decided, it was the desire of the duke, that the double ceremony of the coronation of his consort as daughter of the republic, and her presentation as grand-duchess, should be performed on the same day with solemn pomp: the Venetians were, for this purpose, requested to send embassadors to assist on the occasion; a request to which they willingly acceded.

Giovanni, Micheli, and Antonio Tiepolo, were

appointed by the republic to place the ducal coronet on the brow of their adopted daughter: accompanied by the father of Bianca, her relations, and a train of Venetian nobles, they were received at Florence with princely honours. The commonwealth of Venice, in its most flourishing periods, had never sent an embassy of equal splendor.

On the 13th of October, 1579, the ceremony took place: Bianca, in the presence of the Florentine nobles, the magistrates, the embassadors (with the exception of the Austrian minister), and other foreigners of distinction, was proclaimed grand-duchess of Tuscany, and crowned daughter of the Venetian republic, from the embassadors of which she received the oath of allegiance. The benediction was given to the royal pair by the uncle of Bianca, the patriarch of Aquileia, after which the decree of the senate was read by Micheli, who placed on her temples the ducal crown. Previous to the ceremony, a protest against the whole transaction had been entered by the pope's nuncio; to appease whom, the duke and the Venetian embassadors jointly declared, that their purpose extended but to the crowning Bianca daughter of the republic: on this assurance, the ceremony was suffered to proceed. Francesco displayed on the occasion all his mag-

nificence, the expences being computed at one million of scudi. The father of Bianca received from the duke a considerable annual pension, while a ring, valued at fifteen hundred scudi, was presented to each of the embassadors. In a private letter to the republic, Francesco, after returning his acknowledgments, promised the obedience due from a son to a father.

The political views of Venice, which, notwithstanding the decrease of its power, was intent on plans of aggrandisement, were eminently flattered by this event. The ducal pair had been inaugurated by the Venetian patriarch, while their embassador had placed the coronet on the brow of Bianca: the ducal crown had been used in the ceremony, and not the Venetian cap. The instruction of the senate to the embassador, stated, "that the grand-duke had requested that his consort should be crowned by the Venetian embassador with a ducal crown; thereby publicly to shew his devotion to the republic." It is conjectured that the request of Francesco was made at the instigation of the senate, that the elevation of Bianca might be attributed to Venice, which might thereby avail itself of her gratitude. Nor had the duke, in the power and confidence he had

given to the senate, been, on his side, without political views: having embroiled himself with several of the Italian states, a powerful party opposed him at Rome; his union with Bianca had given umbrage to Austria; with France he had an open rupture; Spain treated him as its vassal; he stood in need of a foreign connection to give him a preponderancy in Italy, while none appeared more eligible than that offered by Venice.

Cardinal Ferdinando, by whom the elevation of Bianca had been unforeseen, could not conceal his chagrin at an event in which his interest was so nearly involved: don Filippo, son to the late archduchess, was in a feeble and precarious state of health; Ferdinando was next in succession; should Bianca yet bear a son, his hopes were cut off, and, even in failure of this, he dreaded those arts and intrigues of which she had already given a specimen. Disgusted at the part taken by Venice in the affair, the cardinal could not hide his displeasure: he expressed his feelings to the embassador of the republic at Rome; nor would he take a journey to Florence to assist at the coronation, but deputed in his stead, two of his chamberlains. Francesco, resenting this conduct, withdrew from his brother all correspond-

ence, while Ferdinando determined on never again returning to Florence. Thus the Medici were once more divided.

The Italian princes availed themselves of the rupture to injure the grand-duke; against whom, and Bianca, while they published bitter satires, they formed a coalition. Previous to these circumstances, the union of Eleonora, eldest daughter of Francesco, with the son of the duke of Mantua, had been negociated: on the exaltation of Bianca the treaty was broken off; the duke of Mantua alleging, that he had never been greatly inclined to the marriage; and that since the princesses were under the direction of the new archduchess, he determined to abandon it altogether: his son, he likewise hinted, was but little disposed to the nuptials, in which they no longer perceived those advantages they had once expected. So humiliating to the duke was the conduct of the confederate princes, that the name of Medici became the contempt of Italy.

A reconciliation with the cardinal was the only mean of affording to Francesco the consequence he had forfeited, and this reconciliation Bianca resolved to effect. To her husband she endeavoured to soften the conduct of his brother, using all her influence to inspire him with senti-

ments less acrimonious. Nor did her arguments and persuasions, strengthened by the effects which had flowed from the dissension, prove ineffectual. The cardinal, gratified by her exertions to restore the peace of the family, observed with pleasure the favourable dispositions of the duke, whom he addressed in a conciliating letter, in which he affected to approve the connection with Venice, and treated Bianca with grateful friendship. In proof of his sincerity, he repaired, in the autumn of the following year, 1580, to Florence, where he remained with his brother till the ensuing winter. During this interval, Bianca, by her respect and attentions, conciliated the regard of the cardinal, while the behaviour of the duke banished from his mind every remaining trace of enmity. Ferdinando was, on the most important occasions, consulted by his brother, who undertook nothing without his approbation. Gratified by the confidence of the duke and duchess, the cardinal joined with theirs his interest at Rome, for the purpose of dividing the confederate princes. The house of Medici thus united, had a prospect of defeating the projects of their enemies. Ferdinando returned, laden with favours and presents, to negociate for his brother at Rome. The adversaries of the grand-duke, whose success depended on

the division of the brothers, found, in their reconciliation, the frustration of their plans, while the Medici regained their former importance. Bianca received from the cardinal the flattering title of 'the restorer of the family peace;' while her ascendancy was, by these measures, not less politic than prudent, firmly established. For the stability of her conduct, Ferdinando trusted to her ambition; while, solicitous to conciliate through his means the affection of the Florentines, Bianca laboured to anticipate his wishes.

The people, however gratified by the union of the brothers, cherished prejudices against the arch-duchess too inveterate to be eradicated. They considered her as the seducer of Francesco, and as the occasion of the premature fate of his former consort; they viewed all her actions through a prejudiced medium, and murmured at the sums expended by the duke for her honour and gratification: his present liberality was contrasted by his parsimony towards the late duchess: they were even reluctant to receive benefits from a woman, against whom they had been in the habit of indulging invective. Francesco had erected for Bianca a magnificent villa at Pratolino, where she principally resided: fictitious tales of cruelty and oppression practised in this place,

which received the title of Villa Tribolina, were invented by popular hatred. Among similar fables, a room was shewn after her death, called the *Stillatoio* of Bianca, in which it was gravely asserted, that from the fat distilling from infants, suspended over boiling water, cosmetics were prepared for the preservation of her beauty. Bianca had a taste for ingenious machinery, with which she delighted to surprise the duke and her visitors: the people, credulous and superstitious, imputed to witchcraft effects, the causes of which they were unable to comprehend. With the weak and prejudiced, even the talents and accomplishments of those they dislike serve but to aggravate their jealousy and hatred. A juster motive of disgust against Bianca was her encouragement of spies and informers; a pernicious race, which multiply in turbulent times, amidst frequent insurrections and changes in government: usurpers, recently raised from obscurity to the throne, and grasping a yet uncertain sceptre, naturally dread treachery in all who approach them, and find their safety connected with a watchful attention to the motions of others. Such, at that period, was the situation of the dukes of Tuscany. Bianca, personally odious to the Florentines, by affection and interest connected with the Medici,

for whom she was solicitous to prove her zeal, liberally supported those wretches, who, existing by the violation of the laws of confidence and honour, are justly held in contempt and abhorrence. By these means, it is said, she made important discoveries, defeated more than one conspiracy, and purchased security for herself and the grand duke at the expence of popular hatred. She is also accused of having fostered favourites, who enriched themselves by the oppression of the people. Among these is mentioned Vittorio Capello, her brother, as one under whose injustice and rapacity the public suffered. Vittorio had remained at Florence after the coronation of his sister, and, trusted by the duke, had abused his confidence. With him was united father Jeremia, of Udine, of the order of St. Francis; a spy, who had been long in the service of Francesco.

Under the domination of these men, for whose removal they clamoured, the people loudly complained. Bianca, whom the *hauteur* assumed by her brother had alienated, withdrawing from him her protection, an opportunity soon offered of removing him from Florence. Vittorio had obtained from the duke a loan of three thousand scudi; on presenting it to the treasurer for pay-

ment, he added an additional cipher. Suspicious of fraud, the treasurer carried the note to his master, who rebuked the Venetian with just severity. Vittorio boldly, in the presence of the treasurer, denied the forgery; when the duke, incensed at his audacity, resolved to dismiss him his service. Bianca approving the determination, her brother was compelled within three days to abandon Florence; while father Jeremia, accused as an accomplice in his oppressions, shared a similar fate.

Octavio Abbioso, whose negociations with Venice had prepared the way for the elevation of Bianca, had obtained, by his management and address on this occasion, the favour of the duke and duchess, who bestowed on him the office vacated by the exile of Vittorio: with him was associated Serguidi, the secretary of state. The public, a case but too common, experienced in the change of the ministry but a change of oppressors; on Bianca, to whom the new promotion was attributed, popular aversion continued to rest.

To internal disquietude, foreign dissension was now added: the expectations of the Venetians from the friendship of Francesco suffered a disappointment: the senate had hoped, through the medium of the duchess, to influence the govern-

ment of Tuscany, in violation of the laws of the republic; and, with a view of acquiring information of what passed in the court, it had indirectly encouraged the stay of Vittorio at Florence, with whose return it was of course dissatisfied. To this was added jealousies respecting the connection of the duke with Spain, which the Venetians, by means of their embassadors, secretly endeavoured to dissolve. But Francesco, who had in consequence of their intrigues received from the cabinet of Madrid severe reproaches, defeated by his vindication the schemes of his treacherous allies.

Vittorio Capello, on his return to Venice, had fermented, in revenge, the discontents of the senate, who affected to resent his dismissal as an insult offered to themselves, in the person of one of their patricians. Informed of the measures taken by the republic to embroil her husband with Spain, Bianca conceived a just displeasure: to both parties an opportunity only seemed wanting, which was not far distant, to break out into open hostilities.

In 1582, a marriage was negociated between don Cæsar, son of the duke of Ferrara, and the niece of the doge of Venice: the title of daughter of the republic, lately conferred upon Bianca,

was also required by the duke for the bride. This negociation, which had not yet been laid before the senate, was to be preserved a secret: Bianca, nevertheless, was informed of what was passing; and conceiving the title would be degraded, if conferred on the wife of a petty prince, she warmly remonstrated with the republic on the occasion. Such a measure, she observed, added to the previous conduct of the Venetian embassador in Spain, would be considered as a disrespect to the grand-duke, and would prove their professions of amity to have been wholly selfish; originating rather in political motives than in friendship for her and the duke. This remonstrance was at first treated by the senate with contempt and derision; but, farther reflection on the probable consequences of the displeasure of Francesco, led them to consider it with greater seriousness. The doge declared, he too well understood the laws of the country to have entered, without previously informing the senate, on such a treaty; while the senate asserted, that no such proposition had been laid before them. The style of Bianca's letter was censured, as injurious to the dignity of the republic. It was observed, 'that it became the mother, rather than the daughter, to determine on what was proper to

be done.' Bianca vindicated her conduct with spirit, while she proved the ignorance pleaded by the senate of this transaction to be pretence and affectation. On this dispute the marriage was postponed; the mutual jealousies of the contending powers broke forth; and, being by other circumstances farther aggravated, terminated in a final rupture.

The harmony which seemed to have been established in the Medici family, received, at the same time, some interruption. Though gratified by the kind offices of Bianca, the cardinal yet entertained a distrust of her character: on her elevation to the rank of grand-duchess, she had employed, in the hope of giving an heir to the duke, every means for the re-establishment of her health; her pregnancy had been frequently reported in Florence; and, after the death of don Filippo, in 1582, Ferdinando conceived himself justified in adopting measures calculated to defeat any artifices which, for such a purpose, might be put in practice. With this view, he entreated his brother, don Pietro, who had remained in Spain, to return home and marry. Failing in this design, he determined on resigning his ecclesiastical dignities, and taking a wife himself, to secure his succession to the ducal government. His jealousy

received an increase, when, in 1583, the duke, in opposition to the advice of his ablest counsellors, declared don Antonio, on whom he had already bestowed several estates, his legitimate son. Antonio was also appointed by the king of Spain as his legate in Italy; to which was added the title of prince of Capestrano; German guards were assigned to him, while from many of the Florentines, who already regarded him as the next in succession, he received the honours due to the second person in the state. These measures, the cardinal, not without foundation, imputed to Bianca; who, skilled in dissembling, betrayed no consciousness of his altered behaviour; but, seizing every opportunity of treating him with esteem and distinction, avoided an open rupture; while, by continuing to confer benefits on his family, she disarmed his displeasure and awakened his gratitude. The cardinal was yet farther gratified by the address and skill displayed by the duchess in the management of a difficult and delicate negociation, which respected the marriages of two princesses of the house of Medici, with the son of the duke of Mantua, and don Cæsar d'Este of the house of Ferrara; which alliances, after various obstacles and interruptions, were concluded towards the close of the year 1584. In

testimony of his sense of the talents and prudence manifested by Bianca on this occasion, Ferdinando presented to her reputed son one of his villas.

In the beginning of the year 1585, soon after the union between the houses of Medici and Ferrara, the duchess used her influence with her husband in favour of Torquato Tasso; who, residing in the court of Ferrara, had, in the dispute between the dukes for precedence, taken part with his patron, and highly offended Francesco. In the prospect of a reconciliation, the poet, to avert the apprehended consequences of his imprudence, had paid court to Bianca. The academy Della Crusca, instituted for the purpose of purifying the Italian language, had likewise declared war against him: having arraigned at their tribunal the contemporary writers, the "*Gierusaleme Liberato*" of Torquato Tasso was one of the first works on which they sat in judgment; while Francesco, irritated by the sarcasms of the poet, secretly urged the academy against him. Tasso, whom in this instance the confidence and dignity of genius seems to have forsaken, vainly sought to avert the critical verdict; while Bianca, whose praises he chanted to his lyre, exerted her good offices with as little success: the duke was in-

flexible in vengeance, and the academy disgraced itself by the condemnation of a work that continues to live in the admiration of posterity.

The harmony of the Medici family, always precarious, suffered about this period a new interruption: the cardinal, who could not conceal his distrust of Bianca, exposed himself to the machinations of her favourites. Serguidi and Abbioso, aware that he was not their friend, observing a coolness between the brothers, availed themselves of the occasion, to revive in the mind of the duke his jealousy and dislike of Ferdinando, from whom he gradually withdrew his confidence.

Such was the situation of affairs, when don Pietro returned from Spain, 1584, bringing in his suit a person named Dovaro. This man, through the means of Serguidi, with whom he joined in undermining the interest of the cardinal, insinuated himself into the favour of the duke and duchess. In 1586, Ferdinando, coming to Florence to assist at the nuptials of one of the princesses, found the mind of his brother wholly alienated. An open rupture ensued, and, immediately after the marriage, the cardinal returned to Rome.

The pregnancy of the duchess was now confidently reported; suspicions of fraud were again roused in the mind of the cardinal; who, on his de-

parture from Florence, charged his brother Pietro to observe narrowly the conduct of Bianca. Pietro, on the point of returning to Spain, postponed his journey for the purpose of performing the commission entrusted to him; but, rash and impetuous, he overacted his part; while, through the medium of a heated imagination, he saw trick and design in the most indifferent circumstances. The countess Bentivoglio, the daughter of the duchess, being to reside with her mother during the absence of her husband, Pietro persuaded himself that she was pregnant, and was to supply Bianca with a child, to be produced as her own offspring. This scheme, in itself improbable, and of difficult execution, carried with it to the cardinal, to whom it was reported, but little evidence: he admonished his brother, in a letter, to greater sagacity and caution. 'The pregnancy of the princess,' said he, 'gives me but little concern; there are women, in obscure corners, better fitted for such occasions.' Pietro exposed to Serguidi the motive of his stay in Florence, which being communicated to the duke and duchess, he received an intimation, that his speedy departure was expected; he was refused access to the apartments of Bianca, and treated by Francesco with haughty coldness. He complained of the infelicity of his

situation to the cardinal, who exhorted him, in return, to patience and perseverance.

Bianca herself, at length, condescended to assure Pietro, that the duke had been deceived by his wishes; that she did not believe herself to be in a state of pregnancy; and that if she were, it would be yet many months before it could be determined by the birth of the child. On this information, Pietro withdrew from Florence, and commenced his journey to Spain.

Francesco, still persuading himself that Bianca was about to bring him an heir, was incensed by the suspicions of his brothers: he wrote with warmth to the cardinal, requesting him to remove his distrust by coming to Florence, and being himself present at the delivery of the duchess. To this Ferdinand replied, that unless the pregnancy of Bianca was proved, he could not undertake the journey. This letter drew from Francesco a retort yet more poignant, with a repetition of his demand. The cardinal answered with increased vehemence; complained of the ill offices of his enemies; declared he would not come to Florence for the purpose mentioned, and justified his conduct and attachment to his brother. To put a period to these altercations, in which the duke still persisted, the cardinal took no more notice of

the pregnancy of the duchess, which terminated in a dangerous sickness.

Notwithstanding the assertions of the Florentine writers, that Bianca had, on this occasion, meditated a new deception, it appears rather that she was herself deceived, and from equivocal symptoms fluctuated in uncertainty as to her situation; her shape was enlarged, and several physicians called to her aid from Bologna and Venice, together with those of Florence, believed her to be pregnant. In her letters to the cardinal she expressed her doubts and her anxiety. In the following year, 1587, the physicians owned their mistake. Of this likewise she informs the cardinal. After speaking of the medicines which had been administered to her, 'I shall soon set out to Pratolina,' says she, 'and there, in the favourable season of the year, continue my cure.' The whole of her conduct, on this occasion, appears to have been open and candid, yet her former duplicity excuses the suspicions of Ferdinando. The *possibility* of her having again meditated an imposition must be allowed: on this supposition, finding the difficulties and jealousies attending a second attempt of this nature multiplied, she might, with a refined management, calculated to sooth and conciliate the cardinal, have gradually

relinquished her design. Whatever success may attend on the practice of artifice, the perpetual distrust it inspires more than counterbalances its advantages.

The coolness between the brothers, by dividing their house, weakened their mutual interest at the court of Rome, to which the death of cardinal d'Este (1586), the friend of Ferdinando, tended to contribute. The enemies of the Medici availed themselves of these circumstances, and, on a promotion of cardinals, the candidates proposed by the grand-duke were overlooked. In reply to the complaints of Ferdinando, he was reproached with the enmity between himself and Francesco: perceiving his interest involved in a reconciliation, he determined on making the attempt, through the medium of Bianca, who had invariably preserved towards him a complaisant conduct. In consequence of this prudent resolution, towards the end of the year 1586, when the report of her pregnancy had scarcely subsided, he addressed a letter to the duchess, filled with professions of respect and friendship, with praises of her meekness and moderation, with complaints of adversaries, who had sowed between himself and his brother the seeds of dissension, with expressions of regret and allegiance, and with repre-

sentations of the detriment which their mutual interest suffered from their disagreements. To this he added, that had not his presence been indispensable at Rome, he would, instead of writing, have paid at Florence his personal respects.

Bianca, availing herself, with pleasure, of this opportunity of regaining his confidence, replied to the letter of the cardinal in an epistle full of encouragement, sagacity, and good counsel. Earnest to accomplish the mediation she had undertaken, and to restore peace between the brothers, she engaged the assistance of the archbishop of Florence, who, with the friendship of the cardinal, enjoyed the esteem and confidence of the duke. By this prelate, the consequences of their family discord were forcibly represented to Francesco, the advantages which it gave to their enemies, the zeal of his brother for the honour and welfare of their house, the slight grounds of their difference, the selfish motives by which, by the parasites of both, it had been widened and aggravated, and the beneficial effects which would follow a reconciliation. These sensible remonstrances were supported and strengthened by Bianca, who, describing to her husband the earnestness with which his brother desired a renewal of their amity, appealed to his feelings and

affections. Perceiving him affected by their mutual representations, she pursued her purpose, till, overpowered by her persuasive eloquence, every objection was vanquished. The duke promised to forget what was past, and professed himself ready to accept the overtures of his brother, whom he desired Bianca to inform of his favourable dispositions. The same assurances were, through his agent at Rome, given to the cardinal, and, as an earnest of their sincerity, a sum of money was transmitted to him, for which he had long sued in vain. The only condition insisted upon, as a test of their mutual amity, was, that the cardinal should pay a visit to the duke and duchess at Florence.

Ferdinando, in the beginning of 1587, received with joy the intelligence of Bianca's successful mediation: a chamberlain was commissioned by him to repair to Florence, to return his acknowledgments to the duke and duchess in form, and to assure them of his intentions of making them a visit in the autumn. The union of the brothers revived their importance in the papal court: Sixtus V. expressed, on the occasion, his admiration of the talents and management of Bianca, whose conduct he declared had been a 'master-piece of politics.'

Sextus, who had a turn for intrigue, was accustomed to profess his admiration of those who had, by skill or artifice, elevated their rank in life: having observed the behaviour of the archduchess, he did justice to the power she displayed, in counteracting the caprices of her husband, and in conciliating the family dissensions: her prudence, her judgment, and her moderation, on delicate and trying occasions, are undoubtedly worthy of admiration. It is imputed to the curiosity of the pope to see a woman of whose talents he had conceived so favourable an opinion, that he determined on making a visit to the duke; the pretence for which was to be a journey to Padua, for the purpose of returning thanks to St. Anthony, for the destruction of a numerous banditti, that had, in the commencement of his reign, infested the states. He received, on declaring this purpose, invitations from the Italian princes, through whose dominions he must pass; but those of the grand-duke only were accepted. Bianca prepared to receive her guest with extraordinary magnificence; but, from the disapprobation expressed by the king of Spain, and the jealousy manifested by the Italian princes, the journey was postponed.

In the beginning of October, Ferdinando arrived

at Florence, and was received by the duke and duchess with affection and friendship; every past difference seemed to be buried in oblivion, and confidence and harmony were perfectly re-established. Mutual apologies, promises, and professions, were given and received: the brothers, with Bianca, repaired together to *Poggia a Cajano*, a hunting villa of the duke's. In this retreat the duchess wholly occupied herself in preparing amusements for the cardinal, and in contributing to his convenience and satisfaction.

But this serenity received a sudden interruption from the illness of Francesco, who, on the 13th of October, was seized with an intermittent fever. Alarming symptoms soon appeared, which the irregularity of his conduct tended to increase: refusing to be governed by his physicians, he would take no medicine, nor conform to the rules which his situation required. The fever rapidly increased, while his strength hourly sunk. Feeling the approach of death, he delivered to the cardinal the plans of his fortresses, named him his successor, recommended to him his wife, don Antonio, and his ministers, and expired October 20th, at forty years of age.

Two days after the commencement of his illness, Bianca sickened of the same disorder. The

cardinal tried to conceal from her the fate of her husband, but the confusion in the palace, and the sadness depictured in the face of her attendants, but too plainly revealed to her the truth: with this conviction, her malady acquired strength. Ferdinando, visiting her, endeavoured to administer consolation: she appeared sensible that her own dissolution was near, thanked the cardinal for his kindness, recommended to his protection her son Antonio and her family, and resigned herself to her fate. In this situation she was left by Ferdinando to the care of the archbishop of Florence, her daughter, and Bentivoglio.

The cardinal returned immediately to Florence, where, having received the oaths of allegiance, he made preparations for the funeral of his brother. Intelligence arrived, on the following day, of the decease of the duchess, who expired nineteen hours after the death of her husband, in the forty-fifth year of her age. The remains of the duke were conveyed to Florence, and, after a private ceremony, deposited in the family vault. Two days afterwards, the body of Bianca being brought to the city, it was met at the gates by the clergy of the church of St. Lorenzo, bearing in their hands wax tapers, by the guard of German lance bearers, and the household of the late duke:

the streets were lighted up through which the procession passed. The corpse was opened, by order of the cardinal, in the presence of don Antonio, of the daughter and son-in-law of Bianca, and of several physicians: the interior parts were found in a state of decay, and the physicians declared themselves of opinion, that the death of the duchess had been occasioned by a dropsy. After the examination, the body being removed to the church of St. Lorenzo, it was placed, during the celebration of the mass, on a bier, previously erected for that of the duke: on the conclusion of the service, it was carried into the vestry, till the new duke had been consulted, respecting its exhibition to the public adorned with the ducal coronet. 'She has worn the crown long enough,' was the reply of Ferdinando; nor would he suffer her to be interred in the vault of the Medici; her remains were therefore deposited under the church of St. Lorenzo. Some days afterwards her escutcheon was, by order of the duke, removed from the public edifices, and replaced by that of donna Joanna of Austria. By a special deed, don Antonio was declared illegitimate.

Bianca bequeathed to her daughter, countess Bentivoglio, thirty thousand scudi; to don Antonio the same sum, with part of her jewels; the

remainder of her effects were to be given to her father. Five thousand scudi were also left to her secretary. The will, having been declared valid by the grand-duke, was fully executed.

The premature death of the duke and duchess, at nearly the same period, gave rise to various conjectures and reports. By some it was asserted, that Bianca attempted to destroy the cardinal by a poisoned tart, which she presented to him at dinner; that, apprised of her design, he refused to partake of it, when the grand-duke, ignorant of the circumstance, unwarily tasted it, reproaching his brother for the distrust his refusal seemed to imply. To this it is added, that Bianca, in the confusion of the moment, unable to prevent the fate of her husband, determined to share it, and swallowed the remainder of the tart. By others, the cardinal only is charged with the catastrophe, and his crime aggravated by a pretence, that he forcibly opposed any assistance being given to the victims, whom he insulted in their expiring agonies.

These stories, which are defective in evidence, appear to have but little foundation in the situation or conduct of the parties, or in the circumstances and publicity which attended the event. The physicians who examined the body of Bianca,

were previously put upon oath, and an instrument of their deposition drawn up and deposited in the archives of Florence. The report, it is not improbable, might have originated with Venice; it is certain, that the senate courted the friendship of the new duke, and expressed their resentment for the conduct of the late duchess, by prohibiting her family from wearing mourning. The disrespect which the cardinal shewed towards the remains of Bianca, for whom he had so recently professed gratitude and affection, seems to have been occasioned by the accusations which, at the instant of his succession, were brought against her. Her enemies, and even those on whom she had showered favours, threw upon her, as a palliation of their own conduct, every charge of oppression and mal-administration preferred against themselves. Nor did they scruple to accuse their benefactress, now incapable of confuting their treachery, of every crime, however atrocious; even of conspiring the destruction of Ferdinando. The cardinal, shocked at these charges, and impressed with an idea of the duplicity of her character, remembered not that the persons who now abused his credulity were those who had been heretofore instruments of the dissensions which had distracted his family. In treating the

remains of Bianca with indignity, he violated the laws of honour and generosity, and insulted the memory of his brother. The Florentine writers, avowed enemies of the duchess, confess, that the conduct of the cardinal is to be attributed to those who, having participated during her life in the liberalities of Bianca, sought, at her death, their safety and interest in traducing their patroness.

The subsequent behaviour of Ferdinando proves his dissatisfaction, on reflection, with his own facility: he solemnly adopted again into his family don Antonio, declared him his nephew, provided for him an establishment suited to a prince of the house of Medici, and procured for him the grand priorship of the order of Malta. He settled also on the father of Bianca a liberal annuity, and made presents to the officers of her household. Thus he endeavoured to efface the remembrance of his past severity.

On a survey of the life of Bianca Capello, whatever may be thought of the qualities of her heart, which it must be confessed are doubtful, it is impossible not to be struck with the powers of her mind, by which, amidst innumerable obstacles, she maintained, undiminished, through life, that ascendancy which her personal charms had first

given her over the affections of a capricious prince. The determination and perseverance with which she prosecuted her plans, sufficiently testify her energy and talents: if, in effecting the end proposed, she was little scrupulous respecting the means, the Italian character, the circumstances of the times, the disadvantages attending her entrance into the world, subjected to artifice and entangled in fraud, must not be forgotten. Brought up in retirement and obscurity, thrown at once into the most trying situations, her prudence, her policy, her self-government, her knowledge of the human mind, and the means of subjecting it, are not less rare than admirable. She possessed singular penetration in discerning characters, and the weaknesses of those with whom she conversed, which she skilfully adapted to her purposes. By an eloquence, soft, insinuating, and powerful, she prevailed over her friends; while, by insnaring them in their own devices, she made her enemies subservient to her views. Such was the fascination of her manners, that the prejudices of those by whom she was hated, yielded, in her presence, to admiration and delight: nothing seemed too arduous for her talents; inexhaustible in resource, whatever she undertook she found means to accomplish. If

she was an impassioned character, she was uniformly animated by ambition. In her first engagement with Buonaventuri, she seems to have been influenced by a restless enterprising temper, disgusted with inactivity, rather than by love: through every scene of her connection with the duke, her motives are sufficiently obvious. With a disposition like that of Bianca, sensibility and tenderness, the appropriate virtues of the sex, are not to be expected. Real greatness has in it a character of simplicity, with which subtlety and craft are wholly incompatible: the genius of Bianca was such as fitted her to take a part in political intrigues, to succeed in courts, and rise to the pinnacle of power; but, stained with cruelty, and debased by falsehood, if her talents excite admiration, they produce no esteem; and while her accomplishments dazzle the mind, they fail to interest the heart.

Majestic in stature, beautiful in her person, animated, eloquent, and insinuating, she commanded all hearts; a power of which the tranquillity and silence of her own enabled her to avail herself to the utmost. Ill health impaired her beauty at an early period; many portraits of her remain, in all of which she is represented as grand-duchess, when the first bloom of her charms had faded.

A beautiful portrait of her, in the ducal robes, is preserved in the palace of the Capelli at Padua; several are likewise to be found in the *Palazzo Pitti* at Florence, and one also, said to be still superior, in the *Palazzo Caprara* at Bologna.

Life of Bianca Capello, wife to Francesco de Medici, Grand-duke of Tuscany; from the German of T. P. Siebenkees, translated by C. Ludger, &c.

CAROLINA,

WIFE TO GEORGE II.

CAROLINA WILHELMINA DOROTHEA, daughter of John Frederic, marquis of Brandenburg-Anspach, and of Eleanor Erdmutch Louisa, his second wife, was born March 1, 1682-3. She was sought in marriage by Charles III. of Spain, afterwards emperor of Germany, whom the fame of her beauty had attracted. To prepare the way for a connection so flattering to the ambition of her family, every possible method was used to get over the difficulty which the difference of religion opposed to the union; but Carolina, steadily adhering to the principles in which she had been educated, rejected every solicitation and expedient that was proposed to her. Her fortitude, on this

occasion, procured her the esteem of the elector of Hanover, and induced him to make choice of her for the wife of his son, the electoral prince, a circumstance particularly gratifying to all the protestants of Europe. The nuptials were accordingly celebrated at Hanover, August 22d, 1705.

Carolina was crowned (with her husband) queen consort of Great Britain, on the 11th of October, 1727. Four sons and five daughters were the fruits of this marriage. The following character of this princess is extracted from the Memoirs of the Baron de Pollnitz *: "The queen is a woman who commands at once both respect and affection. Her appearance bespeaks majesty, blended with modesty, and softened by good-nature. Her manners are courteous, and her mind, solid and brilliant, is adorned with a thousand fine accomplishments. She disdains the frivolous occupations and amusements of her sex, nor does she affect ornament in her dress. In reading select authors she finds her greatest pleasure: she may with truth be accounted one of the most learned princesses in Europe. Having

* Vol. II. page 445, &c.

lost her father when young, she was placed, on the second marriage of her mother, under the guardianship of Frederic, elector of Brandenburg, afterwards king of Prussia, by which means the early periods of her life were passed at the court of Berlin, where she acquired from the electress, sister to George I. those polished manners and elevated sentiments by which this princess was peculiarly distinguished. Having refused to share the throne of Charles III. of Spain, from attachment to her religion, she afterwards gave her hand to the electoral prince of Brunswick-Lunenburg, with whom she was called to ascend one of the first thrones in Europe. She betrayed no emotion on her advancement to this dignity, which she filled with true moderation. While princess of Wales, her prudence enabled her to conciliate the two parties, into which the royal family were divided. The late king, her father-in-law, had for her the sincerest regard, which she returned with gratitude and respect. When raised to the dignity of queen, she studied to contribute to the happiness of the people. She was entrusted with affairs of state by the king, who, during his absence, left her regent of the kingdom."

Dr. Clarke also gives a testimony to the merit

of Carolina, in his dedication to the letters, which passed through her hands, between himself and M. Leibnitz. "It is," says he, "with the highest pleasure and satisfaction, that the following papers, upon so important a subject as the foundations of natural religion, are laid before a princess who, to an inimitable sweetness of temper, candour, and affability towards all, has joined, not only an impartial love of truth, and a desire of promoting learning in general, but has herself likewise attained to a degree of knowledge very particular and uncommon, even in matters of the nicest and most abstract speculation."—"The learned M. Leibnitz well understood how great an honour and reputation it would be to him, to have his arguments approved of by a person of your royal highness's character: but the steady impartiality, and unalterable love of truth, the same constant readiness to hear, and to submit to reason, always so conspicuous, and shining forth so brightly in your royal highness's conduct, which justly made him desirous to exert in these papers his utmost skill in defending his opinions, was an equal encouragement to such as caught him in an error, to endeavour to prove that his opinions could not be defended."

A gentleman of honour and probity, who re-

sided at Hampstead, and who was frequently admitted into the presence of the queen, who entertained for him a great esteem, declared that he had conversed with her upon various subjects, divinity, morals, ecclesiastical polity, commerce, &c. on all of which she displayed great knowledge, promptness, judgment, and acuteness. To an informed and cultivated understanding, she added fluency of expression and an elegant address: she reflected upon what she had read, and applied her principles to the regulation of her passions, and the practical philosophy of human life. She studied human nature, and knew how to influence the mind by an address to the affections. Theology and civil polity were her favourite studies; she distinguished between religion and its establishment, and acknowledged the foundations of government in the laws enacted by the chosen representatives of a free people.

In private life she was an example of the social and domestic virtues; she was sincerely attached to her husband, superintended the education of her children, cultivated their reason, and implanted in their minds the seeds of virtue. She encouraged the sciences, was the patroness of letters, and the benefactress and protector of the miserable and oppressed.

She expired, after an illness of twelve days, on the 20th of November, 1737, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, sincerely lamented by her husband and family, and regretted by the whole nation.

Biographium Fœmineum, &c. &c.

CATHERINE OF ARAGON.

The daughters of Ferdinand of Aragon, the sixth king of Spain, and of Isabella queen of Castile, were distinguished for their learning and piety. Catherine, the youngest, was, in the eighteenth year of her age, November 14th, 1501, espoused to Arthur, prince of Wales, eldest son of Henry VII. with whom she lived four months and nineteen days. Arthur died April 2d, 1502. After his decease, his widow was contracted to his brother Henry, who was then but in the twelfth year of his age.

In his fifteenth year the prince publicly protested against the marriage; but, overpowered by the solicitations of his council, he at length agreed to ratify it, and gave his hand to Catherine, June 3d, immediately after his accession to the

throne. On the 25th of the same month, 1505, Henry and Catherine were crowned at Westminster, by Dr. Warham, archbishop of Canterbury.

The queen, by her sweetness of manners, good sense, and superior endowments, engaged the affections of her husband, and contrived to retain the heart of this fickle and capricious monarch for near twenty years. Catherine, devoted to literature, became the patroness of learned men: the celebrated Erasmus and Ludovicus Vives were more particularly distinguished by her favour. She engaged the latter to draw up instructions for the assistance of her daughter in the study of the Latin. This essay, written by her command, is dedicated to the queen, by an epistle, dated from Oxford, 1523, under the title of "*De Ratione Studii Puerilis.*" The same year Ludovicus also addressed to his patroness a work entitled "*De Institutione Feminæ Christianæ, lib.* 3." The queen was one of his auditors when he read the cardinal's lecture on humanity, in the hall at Christchurch college, which she had recently founded. Ludovicus Vives was also appointed by her Latin tutor to her daughter, the lady Mary. Several foreign authors have asserted that Catherine composed "Meditations upon the Psalms;" also a book entitled "The Lamentation of a Sinner;"

but this seems to be a mistake, these productions are ascribed, with better evidence, to Catherine Parr. In "Burnet's History of the Reformation," are two letters from Catherine of Aragon to her husband; and, in "The Life of Henry V." by Livy, one addressed to the king, then in France, on a victory gained over the Scots, 1513; and another, requesting permission to see her daughter, the princess Mary.

Notwithstanding the deference paid before the Reformation to the papal authority, by which a dispensation had been granted for the marriage of Henry with the widow of his brother, the nuptials had not taken place without scruples, which respected the affinity of the parties: the prejudices of the times were against it, even the late king proved his intention of annulling the contract, at a future opportunity, by having enjoined his son to enter a protest against fulfilling the engagement when he should come of age. On his death-bed, his last injunction to Henry was, to avoid completing a union liable to so many objections, from its singularity and opposition to the customs of the age. After the accession of the prince, the primate, with several members of the privy-council, though over-ruled by the majority, were of the same opinion.

Henry entered not at that time into scruples, to which several circumstances afterwards combined to awaken his attention. The marriage of Mary, his daughter, with the emperor Charles, was opposed by the states of Castile, under pretence of the illegitimacy of the birth of the princess; and to an alliance, afterwards meditated with France, the same objection was made by the French embassador. These events, however humiliating, appeared, at the time, to produce but little effect upon the mind of the king, till strengthened by nearer and more personal motives.

The blameless conduct of the queen, whose beauty, with the decline of her health, began to fade, proved insufficient to retain the affections of her husband: the children she had borne to him, excepting one daughter, had died in their infancy. Henry either began, or affected, to suspect, that the curse of being childless, denounced by the Mosaical law against him who espoused the widow of his brother, was, in his case, about to be fulfilled. Ardently desirous of male issue, it is believed that, with this view, he had a few years previous to this period formed a connection with Catherine, daughter of sir John Blount, a young lady who had borne him a son, a circumstance which seemed to afford him great satisfac-

tion: the infant had, on his birth, been immediately created duke of Richmond.

The succession was also liable to be involved in difficulty, from the doubts suggested respecting the legitimacy of Mary, the disadvantages of her sex, and the vicinity of the next heir, the king of Scots. The evils attending a civil war were yet also recent in the minds of the people. To these public motives, specious if not valid, private passion, still more inauspicious to the cause of the queen, added its force. Anne Boleyn, a beautiful and accomplished woman, maid of honour to Catherine, had attracted the attention, and fascinated the senses of Henry. Anne, educated in the French court, had but lately returned to England; the spirit and vivacity of her conversation, added to the graces of her manner, completed the triumph of her beauty, and secured her a powerful ascendancy over the heart of her royal lover. Her virtue, or her ambition, enabled her to resist the solicitations of the monarch, whose passion, inflamed by opposition, at length prompted him to cherish the design of raising its object to the throne.

Addicted to casuistry, his scruples, reinforced by passion, respecting the legality of his marriage, became hourly more formidable. He proposed his doubts to his confessor, to cardinal Woolsey his

minister, to the bishops and ecclesiastics: he examined the writings of the fathers, attended to the opinions of his courtiers, and listened more especially to the suggestions of his own heart. Wookey politically flattered the inclinations of his master; the bishops, excepting Fisher, bishop of Rochester, were no less complacent, unanimously indulging the royal conscience, by declaring their opinions of the illegality of the title of Catherine. The wavering mind of Henry yielded at length to motives thus pressing; eager to procure the mandate that should give him the privilege of following the dictates of his passions, he commissioned his secretary to apply to the court of Rome for a divorce. All intercourse, excepting that of civility, was broken off with the devoted Catherine, while the power of her rival continued hourly to increase.

It would be unnecessary to detail the ecclesiastical particulars of a process, given at large by the English historians; suffice it to say, that the interest of Clement induced him to favour the inclinations of the monarch; an encouraging answer was therefore given to the petition of the secretary, and a dispensation promised. The negociation was however protracted by objections and difficulties. Catherine was protected by the

emperor, who exhorted her to persevere in her claims: the timidity of the pope, and his dependence upon the empire, confounded his politics, and involved them in ambiguity and deceit.

The queen, whose temper was resolute and firm, swayed by motives the most powerful, determined to withstand the machinations of her adversaries: the imputation of incest thrown on her marriage, roused her indignation, and filled her scrupulous mind with horror and anguish. To these, a consideration yet more tender was added; the pride of the queen and the distress of the wife were aggravated by the feelings of the mother; in yielding her own privileges, the rights of her daughter were also involved. Nor can it be supposed that as a woman and a queen she could be wholly insensible to the triumph of her rival, who, not satisfied with having supplanted her in the heart of her husband, aspired to usurp her dignities and rank.

Under the influence of these motives, she ceased not to implore the interference and protection of the emperor, her nephew; while she earnestly entreated an evocation of the cause to Rome, where justice, she conceived, could only be expected.

A commission had been granted by the pope

to cardinal Campeggio, in which Woolsey was joined, for the trial of the king's marriage. After various delays and subterfuges, the legates at length opened their court in London, May 31st, 1529, and cited the king and queen to appear.

When called upon by the court, Henry immediately answered to his name. But Catherine, rising from her seat, threw herself at the feet of her husband, and, deprecating the injustice she was about to suffer, reminded him, that she was a stranger in his dominions, without protection, without counsel, without assistance, exposed alone to the malice of her enemies; that, quitting her native land and natural protectors, she had reposed her safety and her happiness in his honour and affection; that, during twenty years, she had, with affectionate submission, practised the duties of a wife, and resigned herself in all things to his will. In testimony of her truth, she appealed to his own heart. Her fidelity and her tenderness had surely deserved a better fate, than that she should thus be hurled with indignity from her privileges and her station. A ceremony only, she protested, had made her the wife of his brother. The objections now urged against the validity of her marriage, reflected on the wisdom and honour of their parents, by whom the

union had been formed and sanctioned. In their judgment it was her determination to acquiesce; nor would she submit her honour and her cause to a court, whose dependence upon her enemies was but too apparent, to afford her any prospect or hope of an equitable decision. Having thus, with firmness, delivered her sentiments, she arose, and, bowing to the king, quitted the court, in which she never again could be induced to appear.

The king, after her departure, acknowledged her virtues, the honour, the consistency, and the propriety of her whole conduct, insisting only on his own scruples respecting the legality of their marriage, and narrating (possibly with some reserve) the origin and progress of the doubts by which he had been assailed. He laboured to acquit cardinal Woolsey of all improper conduct in the affair, and requested a sentence from the court conformable to truth and justice.

The legates having again cited Catherine to appear before them, declared her contumacious, notwithstanding her appeal to Rome. They then proceeded to an investigation of the cause, in which the consummation of the marriage of Catharine with Arthur was examined and presumed: many reasonings also were entered into which

respected the extent of the papal authority, and the power of the pope on occasions of this nature. To these discussions Campeggio listened with impatience; and, notwithstanding his instructions to delay the cause, was tempted to cut short the debates on a subject thus delicate and questionable. The trial was, however, protracted till the 23d of July.

Woolsey, waving his privilege as elder cardinal, allowed the business to be conducted by Campeggio, to give to the proceedings a more specious appearance of candour and impartiality. Having presumed to counsel Catherine to submit to the pleasure of the king, she retorted upon him with acrimony, in the following reflections: 'Of these my miseries,' said she, 'I can accuse none but you, my lord of York; because I could not away with your monstrous pride, excessive riot, whoredom, and intolerable oppression, therefore do I now suffer. And because my nephew, the emperor, did not satisfy your insatiable ambition to advance you to the papacy, you threatened to be revenged on him and on his friends: and you have performed your promise. You have been the plotter of wars against him, and raised this storm against me.'

A conclusion to the business seemed to be now

approaching, while Henry daily expected a sentence in his favour. At this critical moment, Campeggio, on a frivolous pretence, suddenly prorogued the court till the 1st day of October: the evocation, which arrived a few days afterwards from Rome, frustrated at once the expectation of the king. This measure, as may be supposed, had originated in the influence of the emperor, who had practised upon the fears of the pope for his more immediate interest. In this stroke, which he was unable to avert, Woolsey foresaw his own ruin. The temper of Henry, impatient of opposition, led him to judge his ministers by the event rather than by the intention, and to make them responsible for every impediment to his desires. Anne Boleyn, who also imputed to Woolsey the failure of her hopes, fortified the prejudices of her lover. To the animosity of the queen and her party he was already exposed; opposing factions combined against him, his fall was rapid and decisive.

By the advice of Dr. Cranmer, who was afterwards promoted to the primacy, the cause was at length referred to the judgment of the universities of Europe, on the presumption that Rome would be unable to resist a reinforcement thus powerful, added to the solicitations of a great

for which they had been adopted, the marriage of Henry with Anne Boleyn. The nuptials were privately celebrated, but soon afterwards made public by the pregnancy of the bride; when measures were taken for a formal declaration of the invalidity of the king's former marriage. Henry still affected to treat Catherine with respect and esteem, while, by every persuasive art, he sought to engage her to resign her claim, and withdraw her appeal from Rome: but, finding her tenacious of the justice of her cause, and bent on maintaining her privileges, he relinquished her society, signifying his wish that she should retire, and requested her to choose for her future residence one of the royal palaces. She fixed her court for some time at Amphill near Dunstable, where Cranmer, now primate, examined the validity of her marriage. Having refused to answer the citation either in person or by proxy, she was declared *contumacious*, while the cause proceeded as before.

The opinions of the universities being produced, and other preparatory steps taken, the primate proceeded to pass sentence, and the marriage of Henry with Catherine was formally annulled. The nuptials of Anne Boleyn were ratified by a subsequent sentence, and she was soon after pub-

licly crowned. September 7th, 1533, she was delivered of a daughter, on whom was bestowed the name of Elizabeth, who afterwards swayed the British sceptre with so much ability and renown.

Lord Mountjoy was commissioned to inform the unfortunate Catherine of these events, and to announce to her, that she must henceforth submit to be treated as princess dowager of Wales. Catherine still refusing to renounce her pretensions, and submit to the king, Henry became incensed by her pertinacity, and, contrary to his first intentions, excluded her daughter from the succession, by appointing the crown to descend to the issue of Anne Boleyn.

The divorce being completed, Catherine retired to Kimbolton castle in Huntingdonshire, where, devoting her life to the observances of an austere piety, she adopted a plain dress, and wore under her garments the habit of St. Francis; she confessed and fasted, arose at midnight to prayer, and received a weekly communion. Six hours of the morning were appropriated by her to prayer, and two hours after dinner dedicated to a perusal of the Lives of the Saints; after which she returned to the chapel, which she quitted not before night. Erasmus, who professed for this

princess high reverence and esteem, dedicated to her his "*Christian Matrimony*," as a book suited to her piety and situation. From a conviction of the injustice she had suffered, he also addressed to her a consolatory letter, in which he directs her hopes and views to another world, and her confidence to a Being who would not fail her in her distress, enforcing his spiritual counsel by the common topics and arguments used on these occasions. But the humiliation of her circumstances, and voluntary mortifications, rendered her not less tenacious of regal honours: from those who refused to acknowledge her claims, she would accept no services, parting with several of her domestics on this account. Vain were the remonstrances or menaces of the king; since the pope had judged her marriage valid, she declared, that rather than submit to the indignity imposed upon her, she would prefer death. A jointure had been assigned to her as princess dowager; but, from her personal attendants, she still exacted the honours of a queen.

Her constitution, originally weak, soon sunk under the severities of her life: she believed the air of Huntingdonshire prejudicial to her health, and requested permission to come nearer to London: this request was refused, and a proposal

made for removing her to Fotheringay castle, where preparations were made for her reception. When informed of this design, Catherine protested, with vehemence, that, unless she were bound with ropes, and carried as a prisoner, she would never go thither.

After three years' residence at Bugden and Kimbolton, she was seized with symptoms of approaching dissolution, December, 1535. The king, on being informed of her situation, deputed Eustachius Caputius, the emperor's embassador, to visit and console her in his name. A short time before her decease, she dictated to one of her woman a letter to Henry, of which the following is a transcript:—"My king and dearest spouse, insomuch as already the hour of my death approacheth, the love and affection I bear you, causeth me to conjure you to have a care of the eternal salvation of your soul, which you ought to prefer before mortal things, or all worldly blessings. It is for this immortal spirit you must neglect the care of your body, for the love of which you have thrown me headlong into many calamities, and your own self into infinite disturbances. But I forgive you with all my heart, humbly beseeching Almighty God he will in heaven confirm the pardon I on earth give you.

I recommend unto you our most dear Mary, your daughter and mine, praying you to be a better father to her than you have been a husband to me. Remember also the three poor maids, companions of my retirement, as likewise all the rest of my servants, giving them a whole year's wages besides what is their due, that so they may be a little recompensed for the good service they have done me; protesting unto you, in the conclusion of this my letter and life, that my eyes love you, and desire to see you more than any thing mortal."

The simplicity and tenderness of this letter drew tears from the king, whose remorse was doubtless heightened by the death of the writer, who expired a few days after, at Kimbolton, in the fifty-second year of her age, January 8th, 1535-6.

By her will, she appointed her body to be privately interred, in a convent of observant friars, who had suffered in her cause; five hundred masses were to be performed for her soul; and a pilgrimage undertaken, to our lady of Walsingham, by a person who, on his way, was to distribute twenty nobles to the poor. She bequeathed considerable legacies to her servants, and requested that her robes might be converted into orna-

ments for the church, in which her remains were to be deposited. The king religiously performed her injunctions, excepting that which respected the disposal of her body, resenting probably the opposition which the convent had given to his divorce. The corpse was interred in the abbey church at Peterburgh, with the honours due to the birth of Catherine, between two pillars, on the north-side the choir, near the great altar. Her hearse was covered with a pall of black velvet, crossed with cloth of silver, which was afterwards exchanged for one of black say.

It is recorded by lord Herbert, in his "History of Henry VIII." that, from respect to the memory of Catherine, Henry not only spared the abbey church at the general dissolution of religious houses, but advanced it to be a cathedral.

Hume's History of England—Ballard's Memoirs of British Ladies—Biographium Fœmineum, &c.

CATHERINE OF MEDICIS.

Catherine of Medicis, celebrated by the French historians for her talents and her crimes, daughter of Lorenzo de Medicis, duke of Urbin, and of Madeline de la Tour, countess of Bou-

logne (in whom ended the house of Auvergne), was born at Florence, April 15th, 1519. She is thus described by Varillas: "Her form was admirable; her aspect expressed majesty blended with softness. In the delicacy of her complexion, and the vivacity of her eyes, she surpassed every other lady of the court. She adapted her habit to her person with such exquisite taste, that, though she frequently changed its form, every dress appeared to her equally advantageous. She introduced the fashion of wearing silk stockings, drawn tight, to display the fine turn of her ancle; for the same reason, she first adopted the mode of placing one leg over the pommel of the saddle in riding on horseback. She invented, at different times, a variety of new fashions, not less becoming than superb. Her suite, in which she took a pleasure in collecting beautiful women, was particularly brilliant. It seemed as if nature had combined in her all the virtues and the vices of her family. Attached, like her ancestor, the count de Vieux, to riches, she managed them not better than Peter I. son of the count, her great great grandfather. She was magnificent beyond every age that had preceded her, like Laurent, her great grandfather; nor was she less refined in her policy: but she possessed not his rectitude of inten-

tion, nor his liberality to men of letters. In ambition she yielded not to Peter II. her grandfather; nor, in pursuit of her end, was she scrupulous respecting the means. After the example of her father, she loved amusements but in proportion only to the expence with which they were accompanied."

She was exposed during her childhood to great danger, through the animosity of the Florentines to the house of Medici, which a faction had expelled from the city. Not content with depriving her of the possessions of her family, her enemies confined her in a monastery. At the siege of Florence, in 1530, Baptista Cei, a violent opponent of the Medicis, proposed that Catherine (then eleven years of age) should be placed on a wall, between two battlements, exposed to the fire of the imperial artillery. Bernaud Castiglioné, yet more brutal, advised in the council that she should be given up to the lust of the soldiery. These propositions, so horrible and atrocious, were received with the indignation they merited. Philibert, prince of Orange, commander of the imperial army before Florence, aspired to the hand of Catherine: but his death, previous to the surrender of the city, dissolved the negociation, and left her free to fulfil a higher destiny.

At fourteen years of age, she was given in marriage, by pope Clement VII. her great uncle, to Henry, duke of Orleans, second son of Francis I. The nuptials were celebrated at Marseilles, October 28th, 1533, in the presence of the pope and the king of France. But her beauty and insinuating manners failed to captivate the heart of her husband, who had devoted himself to the maturer charms of Diana de Poitiers. The character of Catherine, repressed by the circumstances of the times, had not yet discovered itself. She possessed no political influence, nor any seat in the cabinet: her sterility also contributed to lessen her consequence: it was even proposed that the marriage should be dissolved.

In this situation her address and command of temper were admirable: to the king, her father-in-law, whose health began to decline, she assiduously paid her court: she accompanied him to the chace, and made one in the celebrated party known by the name of *Le petite bande de dames de la cour.* She attended him, likewise, on his private excursions to the palaces of Chambord, Fontainbleau, and St. Germain, where he unbent in the company of a select number of favourites. These assiduities rendered her infinitely dear to Francis. To her husband she was no less submissive, while she

suffered the ascendancy of her rival with mildness. By the humility and flexibility of her conduct, in circumstances the most delicate and critical, she rendered herself acceptable to all parties. Her talents were reserved for a more favourable occasion; for the present she was content to remain in obscurity.

Ten years after her marriage, when she had begun to despair of having issue, she was delivered of a son, on whom the name of his grandfather was conferred. On the decease of Francis I, she was crowned with her husband at St. Denis, June 12th, 1540. But she possessed only the title of queen. Diana de Poitiers engrossed, with the favour of the king, the most unbounded political influence, while Catherine submitted to her destiny with a grace that commanded the esteem of her husband, who daily passed with her two hours after he had dined.

Previous to his departure for the Milanese, so long and so unfortunately contended for by the French, Henry vested the regency in the queen, with whom he associated Bertrandi, keeper of the seals, and devoted to his mistress the duchess of Valentinois. Catherine, during this short administration, was guilty of no public act injurious to the state: her character had not yet developed

itself; her intriguing genius and pernicious policy were still latent or unobserved. Pliant in her manners, and mistress of her passions, she yielded, without affecting opposition, to the power of her rival, whose regard she conciliated.

An event now approached which enabled her to throw aside the mask, and to assert the native force of her mind. A tournament was proclaimed in the French court, on the double occasion of the return of peace, and the marriage of Elizabeth of France, the daughter of Catherine (who since the birth of Francis had borne several children), with Philip II. of Spain. Henry, on this occasion, having distinguished his skill and gallantry, was desirous of breaking a lance with the count de Montgomery, captain of his life-guards, and celebrated for his military prowess. Catherine, as if from a presage of the event, besought her husband not to enter the lists; but, resisting her intreaties, he declared his resolution to break one more lance in *her* honour. Montgomery accepted with reluctance the challenge of the king, from which he sought in vain to be excused. Henry commanded his obedience, and, with a fatal temerity, even fought with his visor raised. The lance of the count having, in the rudeness of the shock, broke against the helmet of the king, the

stump entered his right eye, and threw him to the ground. He survived the accident eleven days, but never recovered his speech or his senses. Being conveyed, by the order of the queen, to the palace of Tournelles, every assistance was procured for him but in vain: an incurable abscess formed in the brain, of which he expired, in the forty-first year of his age.

The court, on this catastrophe, was filled with consternation, and divided by intrigues: the contending factions, held in awe by the vigour and activity of Henry, now declared their various pretensions. Diana de Poitiers, while the monarch yet breathed, had received an order from the queen to retire to her own house, and not to presume to enter the chamber of the dying king. 'Does he yet exist?' replied Diana: 'Know, that so long as he shall retain the least appearance of life, I fear not my enemies, however powerful, nor will shew any deference to their menaces or commands. Carry this answer to the queen.'

Catherine, so long obscured, now came forward, and rose into importance: as mother to the young king, her favour was eagerly courted, while her capacity and her talents fitted her for the most arduous offices. Endowed with a thousand great qualities, she wanted only virtue to

direct them to useful and honourable purposes. Her love of pleasure, of letters, of magnificence, were her inferior passions, over which ambition predominated: possessing a calm and intrepid temper, no circumstances, however sudden, however trying, threw her off her guard: she knew how to bend to circumstances, or to accommodate every thing to her purposes. Consummate in dissembling, her manners were seductive, and her conversation insinuating. Sprung from the blood of Cosmo de Medicis, and emulous of the reputation acquired by Francis I. she affected to protect learning, and cultivate the fine arts, amidst the horrors of civil war; even in the most exhausted state of the finances, she was the munificent patroness of men of letters. Expensive and lavish in the entertainments and spectacles which she exhibited to the court, she covered under the mask of pleasure the most atrocious designs; planned a massacre in the midst of a festival, while she caressed the victims of a sanguinary policy. Cruel from ambition rather than from temper, profuse from taste, and rapacious from necessity, she united in her character qualities the most apparently discordant. The majesty of her person, the dignity of her aspect, and the elegance of her dress, added lustre to her beauty, which re-

mained unimpaired to an advanced period of life. Her hands and arms were remarkable for their beauty; her shape, faultless in her youth, became afterwards injured by corpulency; her head also was disproportionably large, nor could she walk any distance without being subject to dizziness: this disorder was probably occasioned by a severe blow on the head, which she had received in hunting, and which subjected her to the operation of the trepan: she also once broke her leg in the same exercise, of which she was peculiarly fond, and which she continued till her sixtieth year. She piqued herself on her skill and boldness in managing a horse.

When Henry lay expiring, the mind of Catherine, though apparently overwhelmed with grief, was intent on the conduct it would be proper for her to pursue. She dreaded the power of the Guises: Montmorenci the constable, who had united himself with her rival, was yet more obnoxious to her. He had dared to suggest suspicions injurious to her honour, by hinting, that of all the children of Henry, one only, a natural daughter, bore any resemblance to him: he had beside uniformly persecuted the Florentines who followed Catherine into France, or who had sought promotion in the court.

These mortifications were submitted to by the queen during the life of her husband, but, when released from the necessity of dissimulation, they were remembered by her and resented. Thus was Catherine induced to lend an ear to the princes of Lorrain, who, as a cement of their union, promised to sacrifice to her the mistress of her husband. Diana, abandoned by the crowd of parasites and courtiers, sunk, in her turn, into neglect and humiliation. Some magnanimity must be allowed on this occasion to Catherine, who, tempted to a bloody and exemplary vengeance on her rival, rejected with firmness the barbarous expedients suggested to her by her courtiers, and, contenting herself with a political victory, repressed, from respect to the memory of her husband, all personal recrimination. Diana was suffered to retain the splendid proofs of affection lavished on her by her lover, and to retire to the palace of Anet, where she passed the remainder of her life. She expressed her sense of this clemency by presenting to the queen the superb palace of *Chaumont-sur-Loire*, situated in the midst of the lands which had been assigned as a dowry to Catherine, who, in return, gave to the duchess the castle of *Chenonceaux* in Touraine.

Catherine, the instant her husband had breath-

ed his last, quitted the body, contrary to the customs of the queens of France, who, by ancient and invariable usage, were not allowed on such occasions to leave their chamber during twenty days; nor, till the royal obsequies were performed, even to behold the light of the sun. But Catherine, superior to common forms, when in pursuit of a favourite purpose, followed the princes of Lorraine to the Louvre, whither they had carried the young monarch, and obtained by that means the exclusive possession of his person.

Animated by an intemperate and barbarous zeal, the new ministers persuaded their youthful sovereign, that in persecuting the huguenots he would adhere to the maxims and conduct of his father. Courts of ecclesiastical judicature, invested with inquisitiorial powers, were accordingly erected, which took cognizance of heresy, and which, from the severity of their inflictions, received the denomination of *chambres ardentes*. These rigorous measures, not confined to the capital, were imitated throughout the provinces; till the calvinists, forced into resistance, and rendered furious by despair, defended themselves against their oppressors.

Catherine, with a temporising policy, endeavoured, as interest suggested, to adjust the ba-

lance between the contending parties. Michael de l'Hôpital, an able minister, and devoted to the queen-mother, confirmed her by his temperate and judicious counsels in that intricate policy, and those arts of division, by which she was characterised. She soon became sensible, that she had committed an error in joining the Guises against the princes of the blood: the former, distrusting her sincerity, observed but little deference towards her, and sought to divest her of all authority. But the evil was not now to be remedied: the princes were already in the power of their enemies, who meditated against them a mortal blow, when by an unforeseen event they were rescued from immediate destruction.

The young king, on his return from the chace, was attacked by a heaviness and stupor; an imposthume formed in his ear, and, having suppurated, was succeeded by a gangrene: his life appeared to be in imminent danger. Catherine, whose maternal feelings ambition stifled, anticipated in the death of her son a situation to which she had long aspired. The approaching minority leaving the regency open to her hopes, she refused her concurrence with the sanguinary projects of the Guises. While both parties courted her as the arbitress of their future fortunes, she employ-

ed, with infinite address and coolness, the measures necessary to secure to herself the first place in the government, under Charles, her son, who had scarcely attained his eleventh year. With this view she obtained from the king of Navarre, to whom, as first prince of the blood, the regency belonged, a written promise to cede to her his claims. The Guises, while they swore to her allegiance, had urged her as the means of securing her authority, and assuring the tranquillity of the approaching reign, to put to death the prince of Condé and the king of Navarre. This counsel was opposed by the duchess of Montpensier, who represented to Catherine, that by such a measure she would confirm the power of the interested advisers, to whom she would herself be ultimately the victim. While she hesitated respecting the conduct proper to observe, de l'Hôpital fixed the wavering balance, and determined her to spare the princes, with whom he advised her to negociate. It was in compliance with these salutary counsels, that a messenger was dispatched to bring the king of Navarre privately, by night, to her apartment, where a conference was held, in which the king was assured by Catherine of her concurrence with his views in repressing the power of the house of Guise.

This interview and compact took place but a few hours before the death of Francis II. who expired on the eighteenth day from the commencement of his malady, aged seventeen years ten months and a fortnight, of which he had reigned a year and five months.

A death so critical to the preservation of the princes, and so advantageous to the queen-mother, gave rise to suspicions of poison: for this report there appears to have been no just ground; the hereditary maladies of the young king, added to the weakness of his constitution, sufficiently account for his premature fate. While the court was occupied by ambition and intrigue, the obsequies of the monarch were indecently neglected: Catherine, who had at the funeral of her husband been ostentatiously magnificent, was equally remiss in that of her son; while the Guises, on whom he had lavished unlimited bounties, preserved on the occasion a frigid indifference: under pretence of remaining to console their niece, Mary Stuart, the widowed queen, they excused themselves from attending the remains of her husband. Francis leaving no issue, the crown descended to Charles his brother.

On the death of the king, the constable Montmorenci, whom distrust had till now with-held

from the court, hastened his return, accompanied by six hundred horse. The Guises excused their conduct by throwing the blame on the memory of Francis, their too-credulous and indulgent sovereign; while the queen-mother, by an address the most flattering and masterly, conciliated the constable, and won him to her purposes. Seduced by her blandishments, he agreed to become the mediator between the princes of Bourbon and of Lorraine: by this measure the regency was secured to Catherine, and Montmorenci, independently of either of the factions, firmly attached to her son. Solicitous to lengthen the minority of the king, and to preserve her own power, Catherine sowed divisions among the principal nobility: negligent of the public tranquillity, and attentive only to her own interest, she opposed with Italian subtilty one party to another. Placed by the premature fate of Francis in the first post of government, from the instant that Charles conceived the desire of reigning alone, she forgot that she was a mother, and regarded him as an enemy.

The states assembled at Orleans opened with a speech from the chancellor de l'Hôpital, in which he exhorted them to toleration and unanimity. Some attempts were made to deprive Catherine of the regency, which she had assumed

by a sort of political violence; but her address extinguished all opposition. Having dissolved the assembly, whose deliberations she feared might tend to abridge the regal privileges, she convoked them to meet again in the following May. Between Montmorenci and the princes of the blood, a powerful combination had been formed: Catherine exerted herself to dissolve a confederacy which she suspected might set bounds to her authority: regardless of the means by which her purpose might be effected, she recalled to court the late mistress of her husband, whom she ordered to essay on the constable (her ancient friend and adherent) her powers of persuasion. Diana obeyed, and this her last public act was crowned with success.

The ceremony of the coronation of Charles, delayed by these dissensions, was at length performed at Rheims, with the customary magnificence. The wounds of the state were not to be healed by this pageantry; while the ambiguous conduct of the regent, by spreading an universal distrust, tended to irritate the malady. In opposing to the power of the great lords the king of Navarre, she affected to favour the reformed religion, while the constable was by her influence secretly prompted to complain of the innovation.

Too weak to suppress by force the numerous parties by which the state was distracted, she substituted in its stead cunning and artifice: but her talents, though great, fell short of her purpose; the fire she had flattered herself with being able to fan or extinguish at pleasure, blazed forth to the destruction of her son and the kingdom.

Between the prince of Condé and the duke of Guise a feigned reconciliation had taken place; while the king of Navarre had, in the assembled states, renounced his pretensions to the regency. Catherine, acquainted with the human heart, knew how to flatter its propensities; she had subjected Navarre, by an allurement adapted to his voluptuous and indolent temper. Among the most beautiful of her maids of honour, she selected one, who served as her instrument on this occasion.

The states being opened with great solemnity at St. Germain, the young king, seated on a throne, was present at the debates: his mother was placed by his side, and, on his left hand, his sister the princess Margaret. Catherine returned her obligation to the king of Navarre by an avowed patronage of the calvinists. This seeming partiality, in which conviction had no share, was the

who, observing her hesitate, declared, that he was come to conduct his sovereign in safety to Paris; roughly adding, that if she chose not to accompany him, she was at liberty to remain alone. No time was allowed her to deliberate on this important measure. Charles, turning towards his mother, as if to enquire her sentiments, and observing her constraint, and that she dared not reply, burst into tears of indignant resentment. Unable to resist, he suffered himself to be conveyed weeping to Melun, and thence to the capital, while the queen yielded to a violence against which she saw no redress. Every artifice had been previously exerted, but without effect, to procure liberty for herself and her son; she had even prepared a boat in which she meant to have carried him off during the night. On finding her schemes defeated, she wisely determined to yield with a grace; mounted on horseback, with the king and her two younger sons, surrounded by the triumvirate and their attendants, on the third day of their journey she arrived at Paris.

Finding all her projects overthrown, and foreseeing a civil war, Catherine had, during her journey, preserved a gloomy silence; while the duke of Guise, regardless of her distress, or the tears of the king, who felt himself a prisoner, in-

sultingly declared, 'That good is always good, whether it proceed from love or force.'

No alternative remained to Condé, deceived as he apprehended by the queen, and the king in the hands of his enemies, but open war. Setting off therefore with the utmost expedition, he made himself, after a vigorous resistance, master of Orleans. Thus commenced the civil war, destined to deluge France with blood.

The taking of Orleans became the signal of revolt throughout the kingdom. The huguenots, excited by the example of their leader, expelled the catholics in various places; several cities fell into their hands; while they were driven by a furious zeal into the most sanguinary excesses. Catherine exerted all her powers to procure an accommodation: while beholding Condé already in possession of half the kingdom, she dreaded lest the adverse party should avail themselves of the precedent, and that the king, between the contending factions, should be ultimately left without revenue or dominions. Prompted by these fears, she sought to conciliate the rival princes, and by repeated and masterly manœuvres to detach Condé from the huguenots: with this view she allured him by the most seductive promises, and tempted him by flattering proposals. An interview took

place between them at Toury near Orleans: the king of Navarre accompanied the regent, while each party was escorted by thirty-six horsemen. The two bands were stationed eight hundred paces from the place of rendezvous, and continued near an hour in their respective posts. At length, gradually approaching, they joined, embraced, and lamented the fate that armed them against each other. An instructive and affecting spectacle! A conference of two hours was, in the mean time, held between Catherine, the prince of Condé, and the king of Navarre. Catherine affected to lament her inability of complying with the demands of the prince, and the interview terminated without effect.

The queen, however unsuccessful, was not discouraged: by her sagacity and penetration, she was enabled to avail herself of the weaknesses of the human mind, to which, on this occasion, she failed not to apply. The prince was at length prevailed on, by her artifice and address, to give his word to quit the kingdom, on condition that the triumvirate should relinquish the administration, the promise of which had been previously obtained. Condé, summoned by Catherine to fulfil the terms of his agreement, made his feigned submissions to her and the king: but admiral

Coligny, distrusting the regent, persuaded the prince to break the treaty. The admiral's entreaties and remonstrances having prevailed, Condé suffered himself to be led back to his party. By this scene of mutual duplicity, the suspence which the negociation had occasioned was terminated, and the war renewed with all its terrors.

The royal army, in which was the queen and her son, after taking Blois, Tours, and Bourges, laid siege to Rouen, defended by Montgomery, famous in the annals of France for his fatal tournament with Henry II. The courage of Catherine on this occasion was truly heroic; every day during the siege she exposed herself to the most imminent personal dangers. The duke of Guise and the constable remonstrated with her in vain on this temerity. 'Why,' she nobly replied, 'should I spare myself more than you? Is it that I have less courage or less interest in the event? It is true that I have less personal force, but in resolution of mind I am not your inferior.' Of what had not Catherine been capable, had this grandeur of sentiment been directed by proper principles! The soldiers, in imitation of the Romans, gave to her the title of '*Mater Castrorum*.'

Thrice was the duke of Guise prevented by the queen from storming the place; but the besieged,

obstinately rejecting an accommodation, the city was at length carried by assault. The king of Navarre met his fate before Rouen.

While the royal arms prevailed at Rouen, the kingdom became a scene of desolation and blood: enflamed by civil discord and religious rage, the parties emulated each other in savage ferocity. In this situation of affairs, the prince of Condé, taking the field with twelve thousand men, determined on marching directly to Paris, in the hope of inducing by terror its inhabitants and the queen to form an accommodation. Catherine, skilled in subtlety and delay, while she amused the prince by fruitless conferences, and seduced from his party his bravest officers, gave the Parisians time to recover themselves, till, convinced of the futility of her offers, Condé, after vainly attempting the capital, was compelled to decamp. The triumvirs following on his steps, an engagement became unavoidable. The huguenots, in the commencement of the battle, by the impetuosity of their charge, bore down all before them; but, imprudently dispersing to plunder, the duke of Guise, who watched his opportunity, fell upon them, and put them to flight. Condé, who disdained to retreat, was surrounded and made prisoner.

Numbers of the royalists had, at the beginning of the engagement, when victory seemed to declare for the huguenots, fled to Paris, where they exclaimed—'That all was lost.' Catherine, always self-possessed, indifferent to religious opinions, and viewing every object through a political medium, received the intelligence with great composure:—* '*Eh bien*,' said she calmly, '*il foudra donc prier Dieu en Francois !*' Intent only on retaining the possession of power, whether Condé or the Guises, the catholics or the huguenots, prevailed, was to her indifferent. The news of the succeeding day gave her greater mortification, foreseeing in the triumph of the Guises her future humiliation. But, dissembling her feelings, she ordered rejoicings to be made for the defeat of the huguenots, and conferred upon the duke the supreme command of the army, an honour with which the troops had already invested him.

It was not long after this triumph, that death blasted the laurels of the duke of Guise, and set bounds to his ambition. He fell at the siege of Orleans by the hand of an assassin. Catherine, who was present at the siege, alarmed lest this catastrophe should involve her in suspicions,

* 'Very well, we must then pray to God in French.'

caused herself to be interrogated in the chamber of the dying man, before his family and a number of the nobility. The duke, in his last moments, earnestly conjured her, as the common mother of her people, to terminate a contest which desolated France; while he pronounced that person who should presume to offer other counsels, an enemy to his king and country.

It was the duke of Guise only who had opposed limits to the intriguing genius of the regent; his death, which must be considered as a misfortune to France, left her without a competitor. To prove her respect for his dying counsels, she made immediate overtures towards a pacification. Through the mediation of the constable and the prince of Condé, a peace was accordingly concluded in terms not unfavourable to the huguenots.

During the tranquillity that succeeded to this storm, the restless spirit of Catherine could not remain passive: she sought to sow distrust between the admiral and Condé, by the insidious proposals which she made to the latter; but, aware of her duplicity, he avoided the snare. His political caution, however, availed him little; Catherine knew how to suit to the character of her victims the proper temptation. It was by voluptuousness and effeminate pleasures that she sought to enervate the mind of the hero, and, by destroy-

ing his activity, to disgust him with the fatigues of a camp. For this purpose she used with success the charms of the ladies in her train. The princess of Condé expired a victim to grief from the neglect and infidelities of her husband.

Having amused the prince with promises of admitting him to a share in the government, Catherine, to evade his demands, employed a subtle expedient. By an edict of Charles V. in 1363, it was necessary that a king of France, before he attained his majority, should have completed his fourteenth year. Charles IX. wanted yet twelve months of this period. By a declaration of his being no longer a minor, Catherine was aware that she should retain, in his name, the supreme authority unmolested: she accordingly procured an act for the purpose to be registered in the parliament of Rouen, which the young king addressed on the occasion in a speech from the throne. The queen-mother arose as her son ceased to speak, and declared before the parliament, that it was with infinite joy she resigned to him the administration. Having thus said, she prepared to take the oath of allegiance, when Charles, descending from the throne, uncovered himself, and advanced to meet her: Catherine embraced him on her knees, while the king de-

clared, that he should more than ever desire her counsel and assistance. Paris refused to confirm the edict, but Charles, tutored by his mother, reprimanded them in terms so severe, that after a considerable delay the decree passed the parliament.

The queen, splendid in all her plans, caused the palace of the Tournelles, in which her husband had expired, to be destroyed, and that of the Tuilleries to be erected in its place. In this design the most celebrated artists of the age were employed, and rewarded with a magnificence truly liberal. Every branch of polite literature received the patronage of Catherine, while, for the embellishment of France, Italy, her native country, was despoiled. She piqued herself on her respect for the memory of Francis I. in whose court her youth had passed, and whom she affected to emulate. Her refinement, her delicacy, the magnificence of her projects, and the elegance of her taste, outstripped the period in which she lived.

Having determined, from various motives, to carry her son on a progress through his dominions, she concealed, under the mask of pleasure, the deep designs she secretly planned. Infractions had been made by each party in the

treaty of peace, which seemed to promise no long duration. It was conjectured by many, that a principal inducement to the tour proposed by Catherine, was to enable herself to estimate the real strength of the huguenots. All her magnificence was displayed in the preparations for this journey; during which the celebrated interview between the king and his sister, the queen of Spain, took place. The latter, escorted by a splendid train, advanced to the frontiers to meet her brother; while Catherine, impatient to embrace her favourite daughter, crossed the river Bidassou, which parts the two kingdoms.

The young queen was received at Bayonne with extraordinary pomp; the interview lasted more than three weeks, during which was exhibited every brilliant spectacle and elegant diversion which the genius of Catherine, fertile in expedients, could invent or procure. It was amidst the reign of pleasures, over which the queen-mother presided as the tutelar deity, that projects of ambition were formed, and sanguinary schemes of vengeance deeply meditated. A gallery of secret communication was constructed between the houses of the queen of Spain and her mother: their meetings thus facilitated, Catherine held with the duke of Alva, the Spanish minister, fre-

quent conferences, which respected the extirpation of the huguenots. This circumstance is avowed by Davila, though in a manner somewhat softened.—"The duke of Alva," says he, "advised the most sanguinary measures, while the queen inclined to temporise: she dreaded the renewal of civil commotions, and felt reluctant to embrue her hands in the blood of the princes and first nobility of France."—However this might have been, it appears certain, that during these interviews a foundation was laid for the tragical events that succeeded.

Rumours of this confederacy for the destruction of the protestants got abroad; suspicions, which the character of Catherine but too well justified, distrust, and jealousy, hourly increased.

The queen-mother, after this meeting, conducted her son to Nerac, a city of Gascony, in which Jane queen of Navarre resided, and thence continued their progress. New sources of war were daily disclosing themselves; the edicts in favour of the reformed were violated with impunity in every province. It was long before the calvinist chiefs could be induced to break the truce, till a combination of causes urged them to commence hostilities; when, as a preliminary to

their undertaking, they sought to possess themselves of the person of the king. This enterprise, of which Catherine received intelligence, failed: ineffectual conferences followed: animosities were mutually inflamed. The huguenots, though few in number, attempted to block up the capital in which Charles had taken refuge. The constable was compelled to give them battle, while numbers secured his victory. The field was obstinately disputed, and dearly gained by the royalists: their leader received in the conflict a mortal wound, of which he died on the ensuing day.

In him expired the last check to the authority of Catherine, who henceforth, freed from every rival, found herself uncontrolled mistress of the mind of her son. It was the constable only who could have inspired the young king with the emulation of reigning alone, of emancipating himself from the tutelage of his mother, and of feeling those powers which Catherine was solicitous to repress.

The huguenot armies, though repulsed, were not subdued: new proposals were tendered to them by the crown, by which a treaty was at length effected, on principles similar to that by which it had been preceded. A temporary suspension of hostilities, rather than a solid peace, once more

took place. The perfidious system of policy pursued by Catherine, added to the sanguinary zeal which animated both parties, rendered a permanent accommodation impracticable and hopeless. The conditions of forbearance were but little observed; mutual rage, alternate insults, and acts of violence, still existed. The treacherous intentions of the court were but too apparent: a plot was laid to seize the person of the prince of Condé, the calvinist chief: the chancellor de l'Hôpital, a mild and virtuous minister, who had, by moderating counsels, opposed, in some degree, a check to Catherine, was deprived of the seals, disgraced, and confined to his house: preparations on all sides were made for fresh hostilities, which broke out in the ensuing spring. The huguenots were at length forced to a decisive action, when the fatal day of Jarnac, in which the royalists conquered, put an end to the life of the prince of Condé, the hero and the leader of the calvinist forces.

This news was received at Paris with universal joy; the king rose at midnight to sing *Te Deum;* the intelligence was announced in triumph to every court in Europe; and the standards, torn from the huguenots, a most acceptable offering, were presented to the sovereign pontiff.

The real advantages resulting to the royalists were however inconsiderable; the calvinists appeared again in the field more terrible from their defeat, and determined to carry the war to the gates of Paris. But this resolution was postponed; new enterprises were projected, followed by new battles and new defeats.

Henry, duke of Anjou, the second and darling son of Catherine, who headed the royal troops, enjoyed the honours of their success. Charles becoming jealous of the glory of his brother, to whom Catherine was attached with fond affection, would no longer be restrained from appearing in the field. He saw with discontent the partiality of his mother, of which he vehemently complained. Catherine, fearing his capacity for business would not always submit to tutelage, preferred the indolent submission of her youngest son, which, should any accident place him on the throne, would secure to her the power for which she sacrificed.

After many struggles between the contending parties, with alternate loss and advantage, peace, so long and so ardently desired, was re-established, on terms not unfavourable to the huguenots. Charles swore to preserve the treaty inviolate, and to protect the calvinists in every benefit it pro-

mised to confer; but under these fair appearances lurked the most cruel and treacherous designs. Catherine, convinced from experience that the huguenots were not to be subdued by force, had already planned the tragic spectacle which two years afterwards astonished Europe. A project so horribly flagitious and unprecedented has stigmatised, with indelible and deserved infamy, the comprehensive, yet detestable, genius which gave it birth. "Like some minister of an angry deity," says an ingenious and entertaining writer *, "Catherine appears to have been occupied only in effecting the ruin of her people, and to have marked her course with carnage and devastation."

To strengthen the union of the parties, a marriage was proposed by the queen-mother, between the princess Margaret, sister to the king, and Henry prince of Navarre. During the preparation for these inauspicious nuptials, pleasure and dissipation appeared to engross the whole court. It becoming necessary also to marry the king, who had entered his twenty-first year, Catherine solicited for him the hand of Elizabeth of England: failing in her suit, she turned her attention to the archduchess Elizabeth, daughter of the

* Wraxall's Memoirs of the House of Valois.

emperor, Maximilian II. a princess whose slender capacity threatened no diminution of her influence over the mind of her son.

The marriage having been celebrated, the young queen was crowned at St. Denis. Catherine displayed on this occasion the magnificence of her spirit, and the elegance of her taste. The entertainments exhibited at court were heightened by the fictions of antiquity, and embellished by the allegories of Greece and Rome. The amusements of Catherine were characterised by a genius, a spirit, and a refinement, that emulated those of more advanced periods, and were scarcely surpassed under the splendid reign of Lewis XIV. the Augustan age of France. "Her extraordinary and universal genius," says the writer before quoted, "comprehended every thing in its embrace, and were equally distinguished in the cabinet or at a banquet, whether directed to the destruction or the delight of mankind: in her qualities the most opposite and discordant in their nature seem to have been blended. She was enabled, by the universality of her talents, to pass, with the easiest transition, from the horrors of war to the dissipations of indolence and peace; and we are forced to lament, that a capacity so exalted should, from the principles by which it

was actuated, produce only more general and lasting evils."

In the coronation entertainments the situation of the state was enigmatically shadowed forth under various forms. By the character of Jupiter the king was pourtrayed; Catherine, under that of Juno; while the huguenots were represented by Tryphon and the giants. Even the tragedy of St. Bartholomew was darkly alluded to by mottoes and devices. The attention of the queen-mother was wholly occupied in spreading toils to ensnare the calvinists, and allure them to their fate. The young king received from her the lessons of a profound dissimulation: under her contagious touch, his virtues became corrupted, his great qualities perverted, and his good dispositions changed into crimes; his penetration degenerated into subtlety, and his prudence into treachery; his vivacity became fury, and his courage ferocity; while a thirst of blood and vengeance irritated his temper and enflamed his heart.

Every artifice was put in practice that might lull into securitity the destined victims, and give them confidence in the observance of the treaty. Coligny, the admiral, and successor to the prince of Condé in the command of the huguenot forces, was more particularly loaded with favours and

caresses; the king embraced him, hung on his neck, and addressed him by the endearing name of father; he was re-admitted to his seat in the council, and his estates restored to him, to which a royal donation was added: so far was this duplicity carried, as to excite the alarm of the catholic leaders.

The admiral, a dupe to Italian cunning, prevailed on the queen of Navarre to pay a visit to the king and his mother, by whom she was received with an excess of adulation. The negociation for the marriage of her son with the princess being concluded, the nuptials waited only to receive a dispensation from Rome. It is related by de Thou, that Charles, after the interview with the queen, demanded of his mother whether he had not played his part well? 'You have begun well, undoubtedly,' replied Catherine, 'but, unless you go on, of what avail will this be?'—'I will take them all in a net,' rejoined he, swearing as was his custom, 'and deliver them over to you.'

Pius V. still refusing his consent to the union of the princess with a huguenot, Charles implored the legate to remove the objections of the holy father, adding with warmth, while he affectionately pressed his hand, 'Oh that it was but per-

mitted me to explain myself farther!'—By Gregory XIII. who succeeded to Pius, the dispensation was at length granted, when a day was appointed for the celebration of the nuptials.

The queen of Navarre, who, with her son and the young prince of Condé, had arrived in Paris for the occasion, was, in the midst of the preparations for the approaching ceremony, seized with a fever, which, after five days' illness, terminated in death. This event, at a moment so critical, roused the jealousy of her party, and drew on Catherine the most injurious suspicions. Coligni, dreading treachery, yet irresolute, had retired to his castle at Chatillon, still delaying his appearance at court, whither new artifices were employed to allure him. Subdued, at length, he came to Paris, and fell into the snare which was laid for him: a train of huguenot nobility accompanied him, followed by the young king of Navarre. Every testimony of respectful friendship was lavished on the admiral and the calvinist nobles, while nothing was omitted that could tend to remove their fears.

The inhabitants of Rochelle, still distrustful, implored Coligni, by repeated messages, to doubt the carresses of a monarch implacable as violent, and the blandishments of their mortal foe, a

faithless Italian woman. To these cautions the admiral magnanimously replied, 'that, though aware of his peril, he would rather suffer himself to be dragged through the streets of Paris, than renew the horrors of a fourth civil war, and replunge his unhappy country in blood.' The maréchal de Montmorency, less heroic, or more clear sighted, obtained permission, under pretence of illness, to retire to his castle, and thus saved himself and his family.

The nuptials of the princess Margaret with Henry of Navarre were soon after solemnised in the church of Notre Dame. The entertainments, given by the court on the occasion, surpassing in splendor all that had preceded them, continued during three days. In these scenes of festivity, over which the queen-mother presided, the projected massacre was determined, its circumstances arranged, and its execution fixed. The purpose of the king and the jesuits was the exclusive destruction of the huguenots; but Catherine, whose heart ambition had seared, inaccessible to tenderness, to pity, or to compunction, superior to bigotry, and governed by the thirst of power, had formed a project more extensive, in which the Guises and Montmorencies were with the calvinists comprehended in one common ruin.

The prelude of the tragedy was to be the

assassination of the admiral, of which a man named Mourevel, already infamous by the murder of a huguenot leader, was appointed the instrument. Posted for the purpose, in a place where Coligny was accustomed to pass, the assassin deliberately waited his arrival. The admiral, walking slowly, engaged in the perusal of some papers, received the balls from a harquebusse, levelled at him from a window; when turning calmly, without betraying any emotion, he pointed to the place whence the shot came—'*Le coup vient de là*,'* said he, holding out his finger. The assassin had escaped, and Coligni was, by his attendants, conveyed to his house.

The king received intelligence of what had passed while playing at tennis in the court of the Louvre. He affected on the news the most furious indignation; he threw down the racket, denounced vengeance on the assassin, and played over every extravagance that might tend to give an appearance of reality to the barbarous farce he was acting. The same day, accompanied by the queen-mother, he visited the wounded admiral, repeated his hypocritical lamentations, and exhausted every conciliating art.

Having passed an hour with Coligni in private

* 'The blow came thence.'

conversation, and listened to his counsels with seeming approbation, Catherine herself took the alarm, and earnestly demanded of her son, what advice the admiral had given to him?—'Why,' replied he with an oath, 'Coligny has counselled me to reign alone, and to be no longer governed by others.'

The just apprehensions of the huguenots were not extinguished by the affectation of Charles; the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé requested permission to leave Paris, in which they no longer considered themselves to be safe; it was with difficulty that they were retained by the solemn and repeated denunciations of vengeance imprecated by the king and his mother on the assassin of Coligni. The calvinist nobles called loudly on the throne for justice: one among them entered the Louvre at the head of four hundred gentlemen, and threatened to revenge the deed of the assassin. By a conduct so rash and imprudent, the massacre was accelerated: Catherine persuaded her son, that by speedy measures only could his own safety be assured. The huguenot leaders consulted among themselves on the steps necessary to be taken at a juncture thus critical; various measures were urged, and a retreat proposed before it should be too late; but the ex-

treme reluctance of the admiral to rekindle the flames of war, determined him, at the hazard of his life, to remain in the capital.

The conferences of the huguenots were, by one of their party, betrayed to the king and his mother, with the secret council assembled in her apartment. It was resolved, on this deposition, immediately to begin the slaughter. As it drew near, Charles appeared to recoil from the atrocity of the purpose, and, shuddering at the consequences, long hesitated. A reluctant assent being at length wrung from him:—'*Eh bien,*' said he, '*puisqu'il le faut, je ne veux pas qu'il en reste un seul que me le puisse reprocher* *. The same night was appointed for the execution of the sanguinary tragedy. The duke of Guise, who cherished a peculiar animosity towards the admiral, from a belief (however lightly founded) that he had been accessary to the murder of his father, was constituted chief of the bloody enterprise, of which the great bell of the palace was to give the signal of commencement. As the terrible moment approached, Charles became yet more irresolute, and discovered strong relenting symptoms: the

* 'Very well,' said he, 'since it must be so, I will not let one remain to reproach me.'

pernicious counsels of his mother had not yet extinguished in his youthful bosom every spark of honour, every sympathy of humanity: an internal conflict rent his mind, cold sweats bedewed his temples, his whole frame trembled, while dreadful images of his slaughtered people filled his imagination with disorder and horror. He paused on the threshold of an enterprise that would deliver his name with infamy to the latest posterity, and overwhelm his memory with execration and abhorrence.

Catherine exerted every power to stifle his compunction, and confirm his wavering purpose. At midnight, at the moment the butchery was about to commence, she entered his apartment, where Guise and his partisans were already assembled. Observing the irresolution and agitation of his mind—'*Vaut-il pas mieux*,' said she, among other arguments used for his encouragement, '*dechirer ces membres pourris que le sein de l'église, epouse de notre Seigneur?** To which she added a passage from the sermons of the bishop of Bitonto—'*Che pieta lor ser crudele; che crudelta lor ser pietosa.*'

* 'Is it not better to tear from the bosom of the church, the spouse of our Lord, those members that are already corrupted?'

Observing the paleness of his countenance, and the drops which hung on his forehead, she reproached him with pusillanimity:—'*Quoi,*' said she, '*vous n'osez vous defaire de gens qui ont si peu menage votre autorité & votre personne?*' * Piqued at this contemptuous reflection, the unhappy Charles gave the order demanded of him. Catherine, seizing the opportunity lest he should once more relent, anticipated by an hour the signal of carnage.

The great bell of the church of St. Germain de l'Auxerrois tolled. At the dreadful knell, new pangs seized the heart of the monarch. The report of pistols was heard in the street. Charles, in an agony of remorse, sent to countermand his orders, but it was too late, the work of death had already begun. The people, become furious, could no longer be restrained. The huguenots who lodged in the vicinity of the palace came forth, awakened by the tumult, to enquire into its cause, and rushed on the swords which opposed their progress. The admiral, roused from the slumbers into which he had fallen, prepared himself for death, which he met with the courage of

* 'How dare you undertake to govern others, who are so little capable of governing yourself?'

a *man* and a hero:—'Young man,' said he, to the assassin who burst into his chamber, 'respect these grey hairs, nor stain them with blood.' A rapier plunged into his bosom was the answer. His body was thrown into the court, at the feet of his enemy, the duke of Guise, who suffered it to be treated with the basest indignities. The son-in-law of Coligni, an amiable and beautiful youth, with numbers of the huguenot nobles, shared the same fate. The bodies were gathered in heaps before the palace, a prospect with which Catherine glutted her vindictive and malignant nature. Even the king forgot his temporary remorse, and fired from the windows of the palace on the wretched fugitives. Over a detail so atrocious and horrible, sickening humanity draws a veil.

While this tragedy was performing in the capital, similar orders had been circulated through the provinces. The extirpation of the calvinists was every-where decreed; but, through various accidents, motives of policy, or individual friendship, many escaped the fate prepared for them. The king of Navarre and the prince of Condé were, not without great opposition, exempted from the slaughter. By the order of Charles they were conducted to his presence, and, with violent menaces, urged to abjure their faith. The king

of Navarre temporised and complied, but Condé persisted in his refusal. '*Mort, messe, ou Bastile!** exclaimed Charles, with a frantic vehemence, that terrified the young prince into submission.

The massacre, in which every outrage was committed that a zeal the most barbarous, and a vengeance the most savage, could devise, lasted through the week. More than five thousand persons, of every rank, perished: their bodies, floating on the Seine, passed in the view of the tyrant, under the windows of the Louvre. A butcher is said to have boasted to his sovereign, while he bared his bloody arm, that he had himself murdered an hundred and fifty huguenots. Catherine of Medicis, the demon of this destruction, beheld, without pity or compunction, the misery of which she had been the cause: having gazed on the head of the admiral, which was presented to her, with a savage delight, she sent it to Rome as the most acceptable present to the sovereign pontiff. Some weeks after these scenes of horror, she carried her son to be a spectator of the execution of an old huguenot gentleman, seventy-two years of

* 'Death, mass, or the Bastile.'

age, and the master of requests, who had escaped in the general carnage. Refining upon cruelty, torches were, by the orders of the king, held to the faces of the victims, who were executed by night, that he might observe in their features the effects of death.

The widow and elder branches of the family of Coligni escaped the messengers dispatched for their destruction; the younger children were seized and conducted to Paris, where neither their youth nor innocence could save them from the cruel policy of the court. The example of the capital was, with a few magnanimous exceptions, but too well imitated in the provinces. The answer of the viscount d'Ortez, on this occasion, to the king, deserves to be ever remembered:— 'Sire,' said he, 'I have received your letter, enjoining the inhabitants of Bayonne to a massacre of the huguenots. Your majesty has, in this city, many faithful servants, but not one executioner.' The number of the calvinists put to death in the various provinces is estimated by Mezerai at twenty-five thousand, the computation is extended by Davila to more than forty thousand persons.

By his shifting and evasive conduct, Charles proved his sense of the horror and infamy of what

had passed. In his circular letters, he at first threw the odium of the whole transaction upon Henry duke of Guise, though he afterwards avowed himself a sharer in the guilt. It was the belief of the court that the huguenots were effectually crushed; but zeal and vengeance, heightened into abhorrence by the injuries they had sustained, still rendered them unconquerable. Rochelle, their grand asylum, shut its gates against the royal forces, headed by the duke of Anjou, in whose camp was the prince of Condé and the king of Navarre. To separate the latter from her daughter was the design of Catherine, a design which was opposed by the princess herself. Never was a siege carried on with greater vigour, or suffered with more determination, than that of Rochelle.

The king, though slowly, began to rouse himself from the delirium into which he had been plunged by his mother. Impressed with terror from a recollection of the blood-stained vigils of St. Bartholomew, he sunk into profound melancholy; nor did he dissemble his resentment of the pernicious counsels by which he had been precipitated on so barbarous an outrage. Catherine having one day rebuked him for his passion and fury with one of his domestics, added, he

would do better to exert his wrath against the rebels of Rochelle, before which so many of his loyal subjects had fallen. '*Madame*,' replied he, '*qui en est cause que vous?—Par la mort —— vous êtes cause de tout**.'

While the duke of Anjou was ineffectually wasting his forces before Rochelle, news arrived of his election to the crown of Poland. This intelligence afforded a pretence for withdrawing from the siege a broken and exhausted army. Deputies were accordingly appointed on either side, and a general pacification, on terms less favourable to the calvinists than those by which it had been preceded, was once more concluded.

In the entertainments with which she honoured the election of her favourite son to the Polish crown, Catherine displayed anew all her magnificence. Sixteen ladies of the court represented on this occasion the sixteen provinces of France: clothed in emblematical and appropriate habits, they formed a dance, which was performed in the palace of the Tuilleries. The king, who had determined for the future to emancipate himself

* 'Madam, who but you are the cause of what has happened?—By the death —— you are the cause of all.'

from the tutelage of his mother, and to pursue measures more salutary to his people, beheld with joy the preparations for the departure of his brother, in whose hands he perceived he had, through the counsels of his mother, entrusted an authority but too extensive. Various motives combined to render Henry averse to quitting France, while Catherine favoured his delay. The king at length declared, with his accustomed vehemence, that he would no longer suffer his stay: Henry affected to obey, yet still lingered; when the king, persuaded that his mother withheld him from treasonable motives, became irritated to fury, and, no longer preserving with Catherine any measures, ordered the door of his apartment to be shut against her. Alarmed by this displeasure, she implored Henry to hasten his departure, if he regarded his own personal safety. The king of Poland thus urged, began his journey with extreme reluctance: the king and the court accompanied him on his way.

It was from motives of prudence that Charles had chosen to conduct his brother, when extreme indisposition compelled him to stop at the town of Vitry in Champagne. The queen-mother, with a train of nobility, proceeded with Henry to the frontiers, where a separation took place. Catherine, her

voice broken by sobs, held her son in her arms a long time, unable to bid him farewel: at length, making an effort to recover herself, '*Allez, mon fils*,' said she, '*vous n'y demeurez pas long-tems* * !' This expression, added to her recent quarrel with Charles, his illness, the extraordinary symptoms by which it was accompanied, with the known partiality of Catherine for her second son, gave rise to the darkest suspicions; of which, however, the character of the queen-mother affords the only probable foundation. The disorder of the king appears to have been attributable to natural causes: since the night of St. Bartholomew, he had betrayed strong marks of internal agitation and distress; his constitution also had suffered by violent exercises, and his lungs were said to be affected by constantly blowing the horn at the chace. He was accustomed daily to play five or six hours at tennis, till his blood was heated and inflamed; he had become likewise incapable of sleeping, except by short and restless intervals. These causes were sufficient to lead him to the grave; and the assurance of Catherine to the king of Poland followed naturally from the state of the

* 'Go, my son, you will not long remain there!'

king's health and his pernicious habits, in which he still indulged himself, and which he could not be persuaded to relinquish: had the prediction of the queen-mother arisen from any other source, it would have violated the known prudence and profound dissimulation of her character. The strength of Charles began to fail at the period when his maturity, capacity, and laudable resolutions, promised happier times to his people: unable to resist the progress of his disorder, he rapidly approached his end, amidst plans of reform and amendment, before he had time, by a change in his conduct, to expiate the fatal errors of his youth.

Calvinism arose with renovated vigor in every province of France: the duke of Alençon, the king's younger brother, who, by the advice of his mother, had been refused the post of lieutenant-general, conspired with the enemies of Charles. The court became a scene of disorder, while Catherine, with a view of throwing an odium on the conspirators, affected a terror which she did not feel, and, followed by her ladies and courtiers, fled to Paris at midnight, whither the king removed the next day.

On an examination of the persons suspected, before Charles and his mother, Henry of Na-

varre boldly asserted, that the life of the king was threatened; that, after the departure of his brother for Poland, a council was held to deliberate on the means of dispatching Charles, whose death was wished by the catholics, for the purpose of raising to the throne the king of Poland, who, they trusted, would complete the destruction of the huguenots. He complained also of ill offices from the queen-mother, at whom his deposition glanced. In a second examination two days afterwards, he repeated, with additional warmth and energy, what he had before affirmed.

In the ensuing spring the maladies of the king revived with redoubled violence, while the renewal of the civil war, with the disaffection among the nobles and princes of the blood, affected him deeply. 'At least,' said he, 'they might have waited for my death; it is too much to distress me now, debilitated as I am by sickness.' Catherine perceiving his end approach, took measures to possess herself of the regency. The declining health of the king had in a great degree restored to her the authority, of which she availed herself to become mistress of those who might oppose themselves to her designs. A pretence was made to arrest the marshals de Montmorenci and Cossé, from whom she feared impe-

diments, after the death of Charles, to the succession of the king of Poland. Orders were also issued for arresting the prince of Condé, who contrived nevertheless to escape. Having taken shelter at Strasbourg, the prince solemnly abjured the catholic religion, which he had been compelled to profess, and publicly resumed the principles of Calvin.

The huguenots, pressed in Normandy, were obliged to lay down their arms, when the count de Montgomeri, one of their greatest leaders, was, after stipulating for his life, necessitated to surrender himself: Catherine, careless of a breach of faith, violated this treaty, to sacrifice to the manes of her husband a man who had innocently been the occasion of his death.

The king, sinking under his disorders, at length took to his bed, at the palace in the Bois de Vincennes. His mother, untouched by his sufferings, availed herself of his weakness to induce him to invest her with the regency: while he retained his faculties, he persisted to refuse her this mark of his confidence, and could only be prevailed upon to grant letters to the provinces, enjoining them, during his illness, and in case of his demise, to obey his mother, till the return of the king of Poland. His struggles and agonies were aug-

mented by the approach of death: three days previous to this event, he was informed by his mother of the capture of Montgomeri; intelligence which he appeared to receive unmoved. 'What, my son,' said she, 'do you not rejoice that he who killed your father is taken?' 'I am no longer interested,' replied the dying monarch, 'in that or any other affair.' This indifference was regarded by Catherine as a presage of speedy dissolution.

On the morning of the day on which he expired, the queen-mother, unaffected by the awful scene, reiterated her intreaties to be named to the regency, and extorted by her urgency a reluctant assent: she immediately dispatched letters, announcing the will of the king. Ambition, the strongest and most destructive of the passions, had extinguished in her heart the affections of humanity. Henry, king of Navarre, having approached the bed of Charles, a few hours previous to his death, the monarch affectionately embraced him: '*Je me fie en vous*,' said he '*de ma femme et de ma fille; je vous le recommende, et Dieu vous gardera! Mais ne vous fiez pas à**'—— Ca-

* 'I trust to you my wife and my daughter; and I pray God to preserve you! But confide not ——'

therine, apprehensive he was about to name herself, interrupted him with '*Monsieur, ne dites pas cela.*' '*Je le dois dire,*' replied the dying king, '*car c'est la vérité**.' Preparing himself with composure for his end, he declared, to the assembled princes and nobles, Henry, king of Poland, successor to the crown of France, his own daughter being, by the Salic law, excluded from the throne. He obliged all present to take the oath of allegiance to their absent monarch, and of obedience to Catherine till his return. Having performed these last duties, Charles expired May 30th, 1574, in his 25th year, which he had nearly completed. Reports of his death having been procured by slow poison were again circulated; in these suspicions his mother was involved; yet, of so atrocious a crime, she has, by an impartial examination, been generally acquitted by historians.

Catherine, sensible of the necessity for the speedy return of the king of Poland, dispatched two messengers to him, two hours after the death of his brother. The first reached Cracovia in a few days, and, according to one of the principal articles of his instructions, advised Henry to con-

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† 'Sir, say not that.'—'I ought to say it; for it is truth.'

firm immediately, by letters patent, the queen-mother in the regency.

In the mean time, Catherine employed all her sagacity and address to keep the huguenots and the malecontents in awe; for which purpose she quartered troops in those provinces where she apprehended most danger, and raised six thousand Swiss and some German horse. The chiefs of the huguenots persisted, notwithstanding, to harass and alarm her; and hostilities, though not violent, still continued. The queen was confirmed in the regency by letters patent from her son, from whom she received at the same time a promise of his return, whenever he should be able to effect his escape from the Polanders, who sought by every effort to detain their monarch.

Catherine, with her court, repaired to Lyons, there to wait the arrival of Henry. Their meeting was tender and affecting: the king assured his mother, that the obligations he owed to her would never be effaced from his mind; and that the royal power with which he was invested should diminish nothing from the respect which he had for her counsels. Catherine presented to him the princes of the blood, to whom he gave a courteous reception. No alteration was made by

Henry in the cabinet, in which the queen-mother held a distinguished place.

The weakness of the king's subsequent conduct, which drew on him the contempt of the nation, threw Catherine into a profound melancholy: she foresaw the ruin of the state, which she knew not how to avert. Her remonstrances and entreaties had lost all influence over the mind of Henry, who was sunk in debauchery and the most abject superstition.

To enter on the disastrous history of this reign would be irrelevant to the present purpose, let it suffice to say, that Henry, deserted by his subjects, and alike contemned both by catholics and huguenots, involved himself with both in the most fatal contentions: the kingdom was divided by factions, and torn by intestine wars. In vain were all the endeavours of Catherine to rouse the mind of her degenerate son, and to inspire him with a portion of her own vigour and capacity. She alternately sought by negociation and address to allay the violence of all parties, and to heal the wounds of the state. By her instances and influence, she succeeded in bringing back to the king the duke of Alençon, his brother, who, in disgust, had joined himself to the huguenot party.

A new treaty of pacification followed, which did little towards removing animosity and distrust. Entire liberty of conscience was demanded and granted to the huguenots, with the public exercise of their religion.

The catholics now took the alarm; dreading lest their church should sink under the efforts of heresy, they confederated for its defence, and formed the celebrated *league*; which, kindling a flame throughout the kingdom, eventually involved the destruction of the king.

During these commotions, Catherine temporised and negociated with various success. Her death, which took place at the castle of Blois, January 5th, 1588, in the 70th year of her age, completed the misfortunes of her son, whose feeble mind, in the critical situation of his affairs, required the support of her counsel and capacity; and who, menaced and opposed by the league, threw himself for protection on the huguenot party.

The memory of Catherine has been, by the protestant historians, uniformly execrated and branded with infamy; the part she took in the fatal massacre of St. Bartholomew has left upon her name an indelible stain. The following testimony to the talents and character of this princess is, with much good sense, and apparent can-

dor, given by Daniel, a catholic, and a French historian. "The accounts of those times, that have come down to us, distorted by party prejudice, render it doubtful, even to this day, whether the praises or reproaches bestowed upon Catherine are most worthy of credit. All, however, agree that she had a great capacity for government, a rare and unusual talent for the most important affairs, a polished, fertile, and magnificent mind; and that these qualities were supported with an air of majesty that commanded the respect of all who approached her, and gave to her an ascendancy in council to which every one felt himself compelled to yield. The point in dispute seems to be, whether her conduct was principally governed by religious motives, or political views. A question not less difficult to decide than it is to penetrate into the secret sentiments and designs of princes, who on subjects of this nature more particularly affect disguise. But, however this may be determined, it has always appeared to me an equal breach of equity, and of the respect due to the memory of great persons, to convey them with infamy down to posterity upon the strength of equivocal symptoms, and of actions with the springs of which we are unacquainted, and which possibly might originate in laudable motives. Of

this injustice many have been guilty when speaking of Catherine, who, all circumstances duly weighed, and without passing into extremes, ought to be considered as one of the most able and accomplished princesses that ever sat upon the throne of France."

Catherine, on her death-bed, subduing the aversion she had always felt for the king of Navarre (afterwards Henry IV. of France), advised her son to engage to his interest both him and the other princes of the blood by regard and kind usage, and to grant liberty of conscience for the good of the state. The turn which affairs soon after took obliged the king to follow her counsels.

Wraxall's History of the House of Valois—Daniel's History of France—Les Femmes Célébres, &c.

CATHERINE I.

EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

CATHERINE I. whom a series of accidents raised from the humblest obscurity to the possession of empire, was the illegitimate daughter of a female peasant. She was born at Ringen, a small village upon the lake Virtcherve, near

Dorpt, in Livonia, on the 5th of April, 1689*. Her original name was Martha, which, on embracing the Greek religion, she changed for that of Catherine. Both the mother and child were, according to the custom of the country, supported by count Rosen, owner of the village, a lieutenant-colonel in the Swedish service. Many persons, from this circumstance, believed the count to be the father of the infant.

The little Martha was scarcely three years of age when death robbed her of her mother; count Rosen, her benefactor, expired also about the same time, when the orphan, thus left wholly destitute, was received into the house of the parish-clerk of the village. Gluck, lutheran minister of Marienburgh, journeying through Ringen a short time after, saw Martha, and took her under his protection: in his family she was brought up, and employed in attending his children. In 1701, about the fourteenth year of her age, she espoused a dragoon of the Swedish garrison of Marienburgh.

Of this transaction there are various accounts: by some it is asserted, that the new-married pair

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* Catherine thus dates her own birth, but the account is considered as doubtful.

remained together for eight days after their nuptials: others, on the contrary, affirm, that, on the morning of the ceremony, the bridegroom was sent with a detachment to Riga, whence he never returned. It is certain, that, on the surrender of Marienburgh to the Russians, he was absent, and that Catherine, reserved for a higher destiny, saw him no more.

General Bauer, beholding Catherine among the prisoners, after the taking of Marienburgh, and being captivated by her youth and beauty, took her to his house, to superintend his domestic affairs, where, in a situation considered by many as more than equivocal, she resided for some time. From general Bauer, she passed into the family of prince Menzikof, who was not less struck with her attractions, and with whom she remained till 1704, when, in the seventeenth year of her age, she became the mistress of Peter the Great. It is related by Weber, that she was first seen by the emperor as she was carrying some dishes through the hall of the prince: by the Austrian minister it is asserted, that she was laundress to prince Menzikof, and that she was recommended by him to Peter at the close of an entertainment, when the company were in a state of intoxication. However this might be, it appears that she gained over the

affections of the emperor so great an ascendancy, that, on the 29th of May, 1711, he made her his wife. The ceremony was privately performed, in the presence of general Bruce, at Jawerof in Poland. On the 20th of February, 1712, it was publicly solemnised with pomp at Petersburgh.

By assiduity and attention, by the softness and complacency of her manners, and by a temper singularly gay and cheerful, Catherine acquired over the mind of the emperor an absolute sway. Peter was subject to an occasional depression and horror of spirits, by which his passions were at times exalted to frenzy: in these dreadful moments, Catherine only dared to approach him: her presence, the sound of her voice, had an immediate power over his senses, and calmed the agony of his mind: she became necessary to his comfort, and even to his existence; she accompanied him in all his journeys, and on his military expeditions.

Of the peace of Pruth, by which the Russian army was rescued from destruction, and of which the following is a brief narration, Catherine was the instrument. In 1711, Peter, in his campaign against the Turks, imprudently led his troops into a disadvantageous situation; thus circumstanced, he desperately determined to cut his way through

the enemy during the darkness of the night. With this resolution, after giving positive orders that no one should approach him on pain of death, he retired to his tent in an agony of spirits. The vice-chancellor Shaffirof, and the principal officers, assembled at this important crisis in the presence of Catherine, and drew up certain preliminaries, in order to obtain a truce from the enemy. Plenipotentiaries were, without the knowledge of Peter, immediately dispatched to the grand vizier, and a peace obtained on conditions more moderate than in so desperate a situation could have been reasonably expected. Catherine, having charged herself with the office of prevailing on the emperor to ratify what had been done, ventured to enter his tent, where her efforts were rewarded with success. She obtained on this occasion great popularity: her conduct at Pruth was even mentioned by Peter, as one of the reasons by which he was induced to crown her publicly at Moscow with his own hand. This ceremony, which led to her subsequent elevation, took place in 1724.

It is asserted by some writers, that the crowning of Catherine was intended by Peter as a preliminary to his future designs in her favour; it has even been said, that he absolutely named her as his successor But of these assertions there

exists no proof. In her manifesto, after her accession, Catherine rests her right to the throne solely upon her coronation at Moscow, and on the resolutions of the senate, the generals, and the clergy, in her favour: had she been positively appointed by the emperor, such a plea would most assuredly have been urged. It was by other means that a woman of obscure and ignoble birth superseded the grandson of Peter the Great, the lineal heir to the Russian empire.

The influence of Catherine over the mind of Peter continued undiminished till within a short time of his decease, when she justly forfeited his confidence. The origin of this change was a discovery made by the emperor of a secret connection between Catherine and Mons, her first chamberlain. Peter, suspicious of what was passing, had recourse to a stratagem to remove his doubts. Under pretence of repairing for a few days to a villa, he quitted Petersburgh, but returned privately to his winter palace. Thence he sent occasionally, as if he had been still in the country, one of his pages, with a message of compliments to the empress, and private orders to observe her motions. From the information of the page, the emperor, on the third night, surprised Catherine with her favourite in an arbour of the garden. Ma-

dame Balke, the sister of Mons, and first lady of the bed-chamber to the empress, was, accompanied by a page, appointed to keep watch without the arbour over the privacy of the lovers. The passions of Peter being inflamed by this discovery, and by the ingratitude of Catherine, he struck her with his cane, as well as the page, who sought to prevent him from entering the arbour. A few days after this transaction, Mons, his sister, and the page, were taken into custody: Mons was conveyed to the winter palace, where he saw only the emperor, who himself brought him his provisions. A report was put in circulation, that these persons were imprisoned for having received bribes, and making their influence over the empress subservient to their rapacity. Mons, examined by Peter, in the presence of major-general Uschakof, and menaced with the torture, confessed the offence laid to his charge. He was sentenced by the czar to lose his head, and soon after suffered his fate. His sister, having received five strokes of the knout, was banished to Siberia: two of her sons, court chamberlains, were also degraded, and sent, as common soldiers, among the Russian troops in Persia.

On the day following the execution of Mons, Peter

conveyed Catherine, in an open carriage, under the gallows, to which was nailed the head of her lover. Without changing countenance at this horrible sight, the empress exclaimed with much *sang froid*—'What a pity it is, that there is so much corruption among courtiers!'.

This event, which took place towards the latter end of the year 1724, was soon followed by the death of the emperor. As Catherine, on her accession, recalled madame Balke to Petersburgh, it was suspected that she had accelerated the death of her husband; but for this suspicion there appears no foundation. The circumstances of the disorder of Peter were well known, and the peculiar symptoms attending his last illness were wholly sufficient to account for his death.

In the year 1724, it had been decreed by Peter, that the power of appointing a successor should be vested in the reigning sovereign; but, when seized with his last illness, he had neglected to appoint an heir to the throne. The disorder on its first attack had not threatened immediate danger, but, having suddenly increased to a violent degree, it in a short time deprived him of his senses. In a lucid interval he demanded pen and paper, but was incapable of tracing legible

characters. He then called for his daughter Anne*, but, before she approached, speech and recollection forsook him: he still breathed, but in a state of entire imbecility, for six-and-thirty hours, and then expired.

It appears from the foregoing account, drawn from unquestionable authority, that a successor was not appointed by Peter, though his conduct affords a presumption that he had intended to name his eldest daughter Anne, had not his disorder suspended his power of acting. While he yet lingered in the agonies of death, cabals were formed to dispose of the crown. At a meeting of many of the principal nobility, it was secretly determined to arrest Catherine, on the moment of the emperor's dissolution, and to place on the throne his grandson Peter Alexievitch. Bassevitz, apprised of this project, hastened to inform the empress, though it was already night. 'My grief and consternation,' replied Catherine, 'render me incapable of acting: do you and prince Menzikof consult together, and I will embrace the measures which you shall in my name approve.' Bassevitz

* It is said by Gordon, that the princess Anne was one of several children which Catherine bore to Peter before he espoused her.

awakened Menzikof from sleep to inform him of the danger by which the empress and her party were menaced. No time remained for demurring; the prince seized the treasure, secured the fortress, and gained by bribes and promises the officers of the guards, together with a few of the nobility, and the principal clergy. The partisans of Catherine being convened in the palace, she appeared among them, and, having claimed the throne in right of her coronation at Moscow, proceeded to expose the dangers of a minority. 'So far,' said she, 'from depriving the grand-duke of the crown, I will receive it only as a sacred deposit, to be restored to him, when, in another world, I shall be re-united to an adored husband, whom I am now about to lose.' The tears which accompanied this pathetic address, added to the previous distribution of jewels and money, produced the desired effect. The remainder of the night was devoted to the necessary preparations, to assure the accession of Catherine on the emperor's decease.

On the morning of the 28th of January, old style, Peter breathed his last. The senate, the generals, the principal nobility, and clergy, hastened, on the news of this event, to proclaim the new sovereign: the adherents of the great-duke ap-

peared secure of success; while the friends of Catherine were avoided as persons whose ruin was certain. Bassevitz, at this crisis, thus whispered to one of the opposite party: 'The empress is mistress of the treasure and the fortress; she has gained over the guards, the synod, and the chief of the nobles: she has even here more adherents than you suppose: advise, therefore, your friends, as they value their heads, not to oppose her.' These intimations were rapidly propagated: at the appointed signal, given by Bassevitz, two regiments of guards, who had by a largess been gained to the cause of Catherine, and who had already surrounded the palace, beat to arms. 'Who,' exclaimed prince Repnin, the commander in chief, 'who has dared to order out the troops without my knowledge?' 'I,' replied general Butturlin, 'without pretending to dispute your authority, in obedience to the commands of my most gracious mistress.'—A profound silence followed this reply. Menzikof, in the moment of suspence, entered, preceding Catherine, whom the duke of Holstein supported. 'I come,' said she, with a voice broken by tears and sighs, 'I come, notwithstanding the sorrow which overwhelms me, to assure you, that, submissive to the will of my departed husband,

which had been taken by them all, in 1722, to acknowledge the successor which Peter should appoint. To this he added, that the sentiments of the emperor, expressed by his secretary, were in effect the appointment of Catherine. That the sentiments, insinuated by the secretary, were so apparent, was denied by the opposite party; who insisted, that, as their late monarch had failed to nominate his heir, this privilege reverted to the state. The archbishop then testified, that Peter had, on the evening before the coronation, at Moscow, declared, in the house of an English merchant, that his view, in placing the crown on the head of Catherine, was to leave her mistress of the empire after his decease. Many persons present having confirmed this story, Menzikof exclaimed aloud—'What need have we of any testament! a refusal to conform to the inclinations of our great sovereign, thus authenticated, would be not more unjust than criminal. Long live the empress Catherine!' The greater part of the assembly having repeated these words, Menzikof saluted Catherine by the title of empress, and paid to her his first obeisance by kissing her hand. His example was followed by all present. The empress next presented herself at the window to the guards and

populace, whose acclamations of 'Long live Catherine!' were shouted aloud, while Menzikof scattered among them handfuls of money. A Livonian peasant was thus exalted to the imperial throne.

Menzikof reigned in the name of Catherine, whom neither abilities nor inclination fitted to direct the helm of government; in the man who had been the original and final instrument of her elevation and good fortune she reposed all her confidence. Her reign was of short duration, and her life irregular: when the weather was fine, she would often pass whole nights in the open air; she indulged herself in the use of Tokay wine, of which she was fond to an intemperate excess. A cancer and a dropsy, aggravated by this conduct, hastened her dissolution: she expired, May 7th, 1727, in the third year of her accession to the throne, and about the thirty-ninth of her age. Her death was by many attributed to poison, a common suspicion in despotic states, but for which in the present case there was no occasion; her conduct and her disorders were adequate to the catastrophe they produced. It was asserted by some persons, that she was poisoned by a glass of spirituous liquor, others said, by a pear, presented to her by general

Diever. Nor did Menzikof escape suspicion; a short time before the decease of the empress, a trifling dispute had occurred between them: he was accused of accelerating her death, for the purpose of enjoying, under the minority of her successor, a more absolute authority. But these reports appear to have been calumnies, the breath of popular rumour, or fabricated to serve the purpose of a party.

Catherine was, in person, under the middle height; in her youth she had been delicate and well formed, but in her latter years inclined to corpulency. Her complexion was fair, her eyes dark, and her hair light, which she was accustomed to change with a black dye. She was wholly illiterate, and could neither write nor read: her daughter Elizabeth used to sign her name for her, which she did particularly to her last will and testament: to public decrees and dispatches, count Osteman put her signature. Her abilities have been, by her panegyrists, greatly exaggerated. By Gordon, who frequently saw her, she is thus represented: "She was a very pretty well-looking woman, of good sense, but not of that sublimity of wit, or rather that quickness of imagination, which some people have believed. The great reason why the czar was so fond of her, was her

exceeding good temper: she never was seen peevish or out of humour; she was obliging and civil to all, never forgetful of her former condition, and withal mighty grateful." Catherine maintained her dignity with a mingled air of ease and grandeur: Peter frequently expressed his admiration at the propriety with which she supported a rank, for which by her birth and youthful habits she had been so little fitted.

The following anecdotes are greatly to her honour. Wurmb, tutor to the children of Gluck, the clergyman in whose house Catherine was a domestic, presented himself before her after the public solemnisation of her marriage with the czar: 'What, thou good man,' said she, recollecting and immediately addressing him with great complacency, 'art thou still alive? I will provide for thee." A pension was soon after settled upon him. She was not less attentive to the family of Gluck, who died a prisoner at Moscow: she pensioned his widow, made his son a page, gave portions to his two eldest daughters, and made the youngest a maid of honour. It is said by Weber, that she frequently enquired after her first husband, and used secretly, when she lived with Menzikof, to send him small sums of money, until, in 1705, he was killed in a skirmish with

the enemy. In a conference with general Schlippenback, who, in 1702, commanded the Swedish army, when Catherine was taken captive by the Russians, she asked him, 'Whether her spouse John was not a brave soldier?' 'Am not I one also?' replied Schlippenback. To this she assented, but repeated her question. 'Yes, please your majesty,' answered the general; 'and I may boast to have had the honour of having him under my command.'

Humanity and compassion for the unfortunate were the peculiar characteristics of Catherine, of which Motraye thus speaks: "She had in some sort the government of all the czar's passions; and even saved the lives of a great many more persons than Fort* was able to do; she inspired him with that humanity which, in the opinion of his subjects, nature seemed to have denied to him. A word from her mouth in favour of a wretch, about to be sacrificed to his anger, would disarm him; but when fully resolved to satisfy that passion, he would give orders for the execution when she was absent, for fear she should plead for the victim." To adopt the expression of the cele-

* A favourite of the czar.

brated Munich, "*Elle étoit proprement la mediatrice entre le monarque & ses sujets* †."

Coxe's Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, &c.

CATHERINE II.

EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

SOPHIA AUGUSTA FREDERICA (afterwards Catherine II.), was born at Stettin, May 2d, 1729. Her father, Christian Augustus of Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg (a small district in Upper Saxony), was major-general in the Prussian service, commander-in-chief of the regiments of infantry, and governor of the town and fortress of Stettin. Her mother, a woman of talents, born princess of Holstein, was the friend and correspondent of Frederic prince-royal of Prussia. Intelligence and vivacity characterised the young Sophia, who was educated under the eye of her mother: her temper was commanding, and her manners dignified; in her childish sports with her compa-

† 'She was the mediatrix between the monarch and his subjects.'

nions, she assumed to herself the direction and control with a spirit and firmness that admitted of no appeal. By a lady of rank, to whom she was personally known at that period, she is thus described: "Her deportment was good; her figure large for her years; her countenance, to which her gaiety and courtesy gave an additional charm, without being beautiful, was agreeable. Her education had been conducted wholly by her mother, who, watching her strictly, carefully repressed that propensity to pride which she early discovered. She was, from her childhood, taught to salute the ladies who visited the princess, with those marks of respect which became her years *."

* Catherine, upon the imperial throne, recollected with pleasure the ease and seclusion of her early life, the place of her birth, and the acquaintance of her youth. She sent annually to the magistrate of Stettin the medals struck, in silver and gold, in commemoration of the events of her reign. Shortly after her accession to the crown, she also transmitted to the society of marksmen of the town, a present of a thousand ducats: she had in her youth frequently attended the amusements of the burghers, and sometimes even shot at the mark. Soon after her arrival at Petersburg, she sent a present of beautiful furs to the lady who had waited on

She resided alternately, till her fifteenth year, in Stettin, in Dornburg, or in Zerbst; she also accompanied her mother in several journeys, by which her mind was enlarged and her manners improved. She frequently made some stay at Hamburg, with her maternal grand-mother, the widow of the bishop of Lubeck, at whose court she received from M. von Brummer, gentleman of the bed-chamber, the most select productions of contemporary writers: attached to letters, to learning, and to meditation, she derived from these communications both profit and pleasure. Her visits to Brunswick were yet more frequent, where, with Elizabeth Sophia Maria, duchess dowager of Wolfenbuttle, she sometimes passed the whole summer.

In December, 1743, she was instructed, at Brunswick, by the court preacher Dove, in the principles of the lutheran church. In the preceding year she made a visit to Berlin, for the purpose of being present at the nuptials of the

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her, and from whom she received her first lessons in French. She presented also to her writing-master a sum of money. In the latter period of her life, she sent, with expressions of esteem, her picture, to a lady, who had been the playmate of her childhood.

prince of Prussia. She likewise revisited Prussia in the beginning of the year 1744, whence she proceeded to Russia.

Three years after the appointment of Peter to the succession, by the empress Elizabeth, by whom he had been called to Russia for the purpose, it was determined to marry him. Sophia, princess of Anhalt Zerbst, was selected, on this occasion, by Elizabeth, for his consort. As a preliminary to these nuptials, the princess embraced the formulary of the Greek church, and, at her initiation, received the name, afterwards so celebrated, of Catherine Alexievna. This alliance, which afforded to politicians a subject of conjecture, had its origin in the influence of private sentiment. The empress had been formerly betrothed to the prince of Holstein-Eutin, brother to the mother of Catherine, who died at the instant when the marriage was about to be celebrated. Tenderly attached to her lover, Elizabeth became inconsolable for his fate, and, in the bitterness of sorrow, renounced for ever the nuptial tie. The irregularities of her subsequent conduct failed to banish from her heart the memory of her first lover, whom she never mentioned but with tears. Of this tenderness the princess of Anhalt-Zerbst resolved to take advantage, for the

advancement of her daughter to the throne; and, having confided her project to the king of Prussia, she received from him both encouragement and support.

Elizabeth had received the princess at Petersburg with kindness and distinction, while the graces of her daughter made on the heart of the grand-duke a powerful impression. The good figure of Peter having also attracted the attention of Sophia, the attachment between the young people was considered as reciprocal, and afforded to the court a subject of animadversion. This predilection was observed by the empress without displeasure: the princess of Zerbst seized a favourable moment, and pleaded the cause of the lovers at the feet of Elizabeth; whom she reminded of the prince of Holstein, and of the attachment of her youth. The empress, affected by these representations, mingled her tears with those of the princess, and promised all that was required of her. On the following morning her choice was announced to the council, and to the foreign ministers; an early day was fixed for the nuptials, and magnificent preparations commenced for the celebration.

A cloud obscured these favourable prospects: Catherine was menaced with the fate of her im-

perial patroness; a fever had seized her lover, accompanied by alarming symptoms. The distemper terminated in a malignant small-pox, which spared the life of the duke, but proved, in its effects, a severer trial of the affection of his mistress. The features of Peter suffered a cruel alteration, his comeliness was wholly defaced, and his countenance for a time scarred and distorted. No one was permitted to approach the princess from the apartment of her lover, lest infection should be conveyed; but tidings of the progress of the disorder were daily brought to Catherine by her mother, who, by an exaggerated description, prepared her for its probable consequences; warning her at the same time to dissemble any disgust which the change might occasion.

These precautions, however prudent, failed in preserving Catherine from a secret horror on her first interview with the duke; but repressing, as she had been instructed, her emotions, she fell on his neck and affectionately embraced him, with marks of the most lively joy. The impressions which had seized her, however stifled at the moment, were not to be effaced; on her return to her chamber she fell into a swoon, from which she revived not till after several hours. With

these feelings, on her recovery, ambition struggled, and finally prevailed: she sought not to defer the celebration of her nuptials, an event so ardently desired by her mother, and which the empress anticipated with pleasure. The marriage was accordingly solemnised, while the attachment, which preceded it, and which was built on a superficial foundation, was already expiring. An apparently good understanding subsisted for a time between the ducal pair, which, while necessary to her interest, was carefully supported by the grand-duchess.

Brought up under the eye of a sensible mother, at no great distance from the court of Frederic, the seat of the sciences and arts, Catherine had, to a strong and comprehensive mind, added extensive knowledge, and a facility of expressing herself, in several languages, with elegance and grace. With an excellent heart and some understanding, the education of Peter had been wholly neglected; deficient in those graces and accomplishments, and in that cultivation of mind, which so eminently distinguished his wife, he felt her superiority and blushed, while she repined at the fate which had united her to a man so little worthy of her, and so ill suited to contribute to her happiness or improvement. Their mutual disgust,

which daily increased, became at length but too visible to the court.

Elizabeth had, from the moment of naming her nephew to the succession, considered him as her rival: influenced probably by a narrow jealousy, she had removed him from the tuition of Brumner, a man of an enlightened mind, under whom his education had begun in Holstein, and consigned him to the charge of Thoglokoff, whose powers were contracted, and whose endowments were mean. From the few who, regretting the ignorance and neglect in which the duke was left, ventured to point out the impropriety of such a conduct, all remonstrance proved vain; the empress, governed by sordid motives, was either deaf to their instances, or repulsed their importunities with displeasure and harshness. Johanna, a woman of the bed-chamber, had the courage to enquire of her mistress, why the grand-duke was excluded from the deliberations of the council? 'If you will not permit him,' said she, 'to learn what is necessary for the affairs of government, what think you is to become of him and the empire?' —'Johanna,' replied Elizabeth, regarding her with sternness, 'knowest thou the way to Siberia?' It is thus that, by despotism, truth and justice are silenced.

Peter had, from the moment of his arrival, been beheld with distrust by the principal Russian families: among the most determined of his enemies was the chancellor Bestucheff, who, having formed the design of excluding him from the throne, occupied himself incessantly respecting the means by which it was to be effected. Without flattering himself with his complete disinheritance, he sought to banish him to the camps and armies, and to place Catherine at the head of affairs. Having matured his plan, and communicated it to those by whom it was likely to be approved, he conducted his intrigues with diligence and address. The employments allotted to his agents and partisans, to whom instructions, in disguised characters, were daily given, was to alienate the affections of the empress from her successor: with this view his faults were aggravated, and his defects exaggerated, while vices and designs of which he was wholly guiltless were artfully imputed to him. The jealousy of Elizabeth was, by this conduct, without difficulty awakened, and her fears roused. Credulous and timid, she listened eagerly to the calumnies with which her ears were assailed, and imbibed the poison so subtily administered. The enmity of the chancellor had its source in his fears; having

privately injured the grand-duke and his family, he dreaded the vengeance due to his offences. The house of Austria was also supported by Bestucheff against the king of Prussia, to whom Peter was devoted with youthful enthusiasm. The associates of the duke, and those whom he regarded as his friends, were, by the artifices of the chancellor, converted into spies upon his conduct. The conspirators, among whom were the young princess Dashkoff and Maria Simeonovna Tshogloköff, lady of honour and confidant of the empress, met at the house of Cyril Razumoffsky, a man of mean birth, whom fortune had rapidly raised, and who cherished against Peter a personal animosity.

Among other accusations brought forward against their victim was that of drunkenness, a habit he had not then acquired, and which he afterwards probably contracted as a temporary relief against the lassitude of indolence, or to drown reflection as the difficulties of his situation increased. To convince the empress of the truth of this imputation, was the task allotted to Maria Simeonovna, who affected to deplore to her royal mistress the excesses into which her successor had fallen. Of the justice of this accusation, Elizabeth demanded of Maria a proof; 'Nothing

is easier,' replied the treacherous confidant; 'your majesty shall be satisfied by sensible evidence.' A few days after this conversation, Peter, being indisposed, received from this lady a consolatory visit: with great affectation of sympathy and concern, she requested permission of the duke to remain with him while he dined: her petition was readily granted, while Peter, good-humouredly, desired her to take a place at table. During the repast, Maria testified, with many sprightly sallies, her satisfaction at the honour she received, and her attachment to the duke, whom she failed not to ply with champagne, which she assured him was a sovereign remedy for all his complaints. Peter was, by her importunity, induced to drink to the health of the empress in repeated bumpers, till his head at length grew giddy. His companion, as the effects of the liquor became more apparent, perceiving the critical moment, ran to her mistress, whom she conducted to the scene thus artfully prepared. Elizabeth, ignorant of what had passed, beheld, with mingled indignation and grief, the condition of the duke, against whom she was previously but too much disposed to receive prejudices.

Emboldened by their success, the conspirators set no bounds to their calumnies, by which the

unfortunate prince was rendered odious to his aunt: a prey to lassitude, the inactivity in which he languished, with the flexibility of his temper, gave but too many advantages to the perfidy of his enemies. Persuaded of his misconduct, the empress gradually withdrew from him her favour. Complaints sometimes escaped him, which were, with aggravation, uniformly reported to the empress. Elizabeth had, soon after his marriage, presented to him Oranienbaum, a palace in the country: thither he was accustomed to retire, and immure himself as a state prisoner rather than as heir to the crown. In this retreat, his employment was to perform with his people, habited in the German uniform, the Prussian exercise; and hither Elizabeth, not displeased with an occupation which preserved him from pursuits more obnoxious, sent to him soldiers, drafted from the regiments, with whom he delivered himself up to military amusements. To these men he added others, whom he selected for their skill in music, or theatrical exhibitions, of whom he formed a dramatic company; while the best pieces of the German theatre were chosen for their performance. But finding these exercises and entertainments insufficient to fill up the whole of his time, he relaxed into the habits contracted

during his inactivity at Petersburg. His enemies, taking advantage of his predilection for whatever was Prussian, found means to persuade him that smoking and drinking were the favourite recreations of the Prussian officers: to precept, the young people, by whom he was surrounded, added example; while Peter became the dupe and the victim of their insidious purposes.

Catherine, in the mean time, guided by a shrewd and vigilant mother, insinuated herself into the favour of the most considerable persons of the court: ambition triumphed in her mind over every inferior propensity, and enabled her to extort, by the propriety of her conduct, the esteem of those whose affection she failed to conciliate. It is a trite observation, that to counsel and to practise often require different talents: the princess of Zerbst, negligent of the maxims so successfully inculcated upon her daughter, abused the powers with which she was entrusted, and disgusted the favourites of the empress: the jealousy of Elizabeth being awakened, she withdrew from the mother of Catherine her confidence. Distressed by this reverse of fortune, the princess vainly turned for succour on every side; complaints were multiplied against her, and the irritation of the empress daily aggravated:

an order was at length procured, by her enemies, which compelled the princess to quit the empire. Catherine could not see the departure of her mother, whom the most poignant grief appeared to overwhelm, without concern; but ambition diverted her filial sorrow, which the allurements of pleasure contributed more effectually to subdue.

Among the gentlemen by whom the grand-duke was surrounded, Soltikoff, his chamberlain, was distinguished no less for the graces of his person, than for the variety and elegance of his acquirements: rendered formidable among the husbands of Petersburg by his reputation for gallantry, his youth, his vanity, and the favour of the ladies of the court, combined to inspire him with presumption: he had even the temerity to raise his eyes to the consort of his master. Having sedulously studied the character of Catherine, he perceived the constraint under which she lived accorded but ill with her temper, and, that to a young princess, whose heart revolted from the ties her ambition had formed, the solitude of Oranienbaum was but too likely to render dissipation acceptable. In this persuasion, he daily contrived for her new amusements, engaging the grand-duke to give frequent entertainments, of which he took upon himself the direction and superintendance. Catherine was

privately given to understand, that for these attentions, of which she was the only object, she was indebted to the chamberlain, whose vivacity, assiduities, and attractions, failed not to produce their effect on her senses. This predilection was probably augmented by the respectful reserve of the lover, who hesitated to risque the declaration of his purpose. An eclaircissement was hastened by the death of the father of Soltikoff, who, on this event, was compelled by duty to repair to Mosco. Having obtained permission of the duke to depart, he solicited an audience of leave of the duchess. The sorrow of the chamberlain, whether real or affected, at this separation, threw him off his guard; when Catherine, touched by his apparent struggles, conjured him to shorten his absence, and to return and forget his grief in the midst of a court, where his presence formed the principal attraction. Soltikoff perceived his triumph; and, elate with pride, speedily dispatched his domestic business, and prepared to go back to Petersburg.

On his return, his confidence appears to have given way to distrust; aware of the dangers which threatened his presumption, he dreaded having mistaken the sentiments of the duchess, and incurring, by his presumption, a perpetual

imprisonment. The brilliant hopes which his vanity had nurtured, his prudence led him to resolve on renouncing: his health and spirits suffered in the conflict, melancholy corroded his thoughts and seized on his heart. Catherine, alarmed at the situation of her lover, one day, on finding herself alone with him, pressed him to reveal to her the source of his disquiet. Unable to resist a solicitude so flattering, the enamoured chamberlain fully unveiled a secret as yet but imperfectly disclosed. The duchess listened to this declaration without betraying any displeasure; she even condescended to assure him of her pity, while she failed not to exhort him to repress an inclination so pregnant with dangers. The mildness of her reproof having inspired her lover with courage, he threw himself, with a vehement action, at her feet. Catherine, betraying manifest discomposure, and letting fall some tears, precipitately retired to her closet; repeating, as she withdrew, the address of Monimia to Ziphares, in the tragedy of Mithridates: "Et méritez les pleurs que vous m'allez coûter *." From that moment the chamberlain resumed his vivacity, a change apparent to all who surrounded him.

* 'And merit those tears you are about to cost me.'

During the summer residence of the grand-duke and duchess at Oranienbaum, they made occasional visits to Peterkoff, at the invitation of the empress, to share in the pleasures of the imperial court. Soltikoff, on these occasions, was ever of their party. Catherine, to avoid the observation of the curious and malignant, absented herself under the pretence of indisposition from the festivities of the palace. The chamberlain had, by his powers of insinuation, infatuated his master, by whom he was commissioned to exert his talents to cheer, in her solitude, the depressed spirits of the duchess. The lovers thus wanted no opportunities to entertain each other.

But in its tide of prosperity, and in the exultation of success, the fortune of Soltikoff suffered a sudden check. Curiosity, envy, malice, and interest, the never-failing passions attendant on courts, combined to discover his favour with the duchess; while, of the advantages which their intimacy afforded, his *friends* availed themselves to effect his disgrace. Their discoveries were eagerly carried to the empress, who, in the first tumult of surprise and indignation, threatened to punish the presumption of the favourite by an exile into Siberia. Informed of the fate with which he was menaced, the unfortunate cham-

berlain revolved in his thoughts the means of averting the impending storm. With this view, he ran to the duke, and, with an air of candour and injured virtue, complained of the slanders by which he was assailed; nor did he fail to remind his patron, that, in his own express command, had originated those interviews with the duchess, whom he had never approached but with profound respect, to which he was now about to become a victim: it was plain, he added, that the calumnies, of which he was the ostensible subject, had for their end an object more important; that in the ruin of an individual, the heir of the empire, and the honour of the crown, were equally implicated. He concluded this remonstrance by demanding, as a mean to calm the mind of the empress, and disarm the malice of his enemies, permission to retire to Mosco.

Imposed on by the artifices of his chamberlain, Peter persuaded himself that it was for his own honour to retain him at court. Having ordered him to remain in his place, he demanded an audience of the empress. To her he complained, in high terms, of the falsehoods so infamously propagated; and defended his favourite with so much vehemence, and so many plausible arguments, that Elizabeth, becoming a convert to his

reasoning, was impressed with a conviction of the innocence of Soltikoff, and the malice of his accusers.

The duchess, during these transactions, remained not inactive: informed of the conduct of her husband, and the success by which it had been attended, she presented herself immediately before the empress. For her accustomed air of meekness and submission, she substituted a haughty and spirited demeanor; she reproached Elizabeth for the easy credit which had been given to the calumnies of her enemies. While she represented the fallacy of those proofs of her innocence, which the empress demanded, and insisted on the disgrace attending the discussion of a subject in its nature so humiliating, grief, revenge, and passion, gave alternate force and vivacity to her eloquence. Elizabeth, unable to resist her appeal, was touched, persuaded, convinced, and the triumph of Catherine was complete.

In the evening circle at the palace, Soltikoff appeared: Elizabeth, eager to repair the injury he had sustained, and to testify her sense of his innocence, advanced, in the midst of his enemies, to the back of a chair in which he was seated, engaged at play, and enquired with a grace and affability, which she well knew how to assume,

whether he was happy? 'Never, madam,' replied the chamberlain. 'I am sorry for it,' said the empress; 'but that perhaps may be your own fault. It is reported that you design to quit the grand-duke; but I cannot believe it, and I invite you to remain with him. Be assured, should your enemies again attempt to injure you, you shall find in me a defender.' By a declaration thus encouraging the chamberlain was re-assured, and his adversaries effectually silenced.

Soltikoff, unmoved by the generous kindness of his master, now enjoyed his good fortune without fear or remorse; while Catherine, to whom success had given boldness, relaxed in her precautions: the example of the empress, whose manners became daily more corrupt, seemed to afford an excuse for the conduct of the grand-duchess, with which Elizabeth no longer interfered.

The duchess shortly expected to become a mother: time had not enfeebled her attachment to her lover, whose ascendancy over her heart became hourly strengthened. At the summit of his elevation, and in the midst of security, Soltikoff prepared for himself the gulf in which he was finally overwhelmed. The chancellor Bestucheff, incessantly meditating on the means of

displacing the duke, silently observed the progress of the favourite, whose confidence he was intent on acquiring. Blinded by vanity, the chamberlain was entangled in the toils so artfully spread for him. By the crafty minister, whose only aim was to rid himself of a rival, he was induced to embrace the most pernicious measures. Persuaded by Bestucheff, that to augment his influence over the mind of his master, he had only to remove from him every competitor, he provoked against himself a swarm of enemies, and demolished, in a moment, an edifice, which to erect had cost him the labour of years. The courtiers and favourites whom he had supplanted, joining their efforts to those of the chancellor, carried to the throne their united complaints. The opportunity to which his perfidy had been directed, was seized and improved by Bestucheff, who, in a conference with Elizabeth, recalled to her mind the faults and weaknesses of her nephew, and accused Soltikoff as the cause, who, for the purpose of subjecting more entirely the mind of the duke, had, he affirmed, driven from his presence every person of distinction or worth, and surrounded him with parasites and debauchees. In addition to these charges, he revived the suspicions of a criminal intercourse between the favourite and Catherine,

a subject which admitted of but too many proofs. In conclusion, the unfortunate chamberlain was pourtrayed, but too justly, as a fostered and treacherous servant, who had abused the confidence of his master, and by whose ambition the empire was threatened with ruin.

Prejudiced by these representations, Elizabeth felt her anger again roused; while, for the execution of its dictates, surer methods were planned under the direction of the chancellor. To cover the disgrace of Soltikoff by a specious pretext, and to remove from him the possibility of pleading in his own defence, and laying open the machinations of his enemies, he was commissioned, under the title of envoy-extraordinary, to repair to Stockholm, and notify to the king of Sweden the birth of Paul Petrowitch, of whom the grand-duchess had been recently delivered. This embassy, which he considered as a new mark of favour, was gratefully accepted by the chamberlain. But scarcely had he quitted Stockholm, on his return to Petersburg, when an order was put into his hand, by a courier who met him on the road, by which he was enjoined to proceed to Hamburg, and to remain there, till recalled, as minister-plenipotentiary from the Russian court. Enlightened by these measures, respecting the de-

ceptions practised against him, Soltikoff wrote to the grand-duchess, acquainted her with what had past, and conjured her to solicit his return.

Catherine, scarcely less sensible than himself to their separation, prepared to exert, with the empress, her talents and interest in favour of her exiled lover; but a visit from the chancellor, by whom her sentiments had been foreseen, induced her, with whatever reluctance, to relinquish her purpose. The dictates of tenderness were superseded by those of ambition, the stronger passion of Catherine, in which every other was wholly absorbed. It required some time to efface from her heart the regard she had felt for Soltikoff; she wrote to him often, and received his letters in turn: her passion appeared even to be increased by his misfortunes; till, by a new impression, it was wholly erased from her mind. The ties of voluptuousness are soon broken by the impracticability of gratification; the senses of Catherine were susceptible and lively, but a heart like hers was a stranger to love.

Stanislaus Poniatoffsky, afterwards elevated to the throne of Poland, succeeded to the chamberlain in the favour of the grand-duchess. Aspiring, handsome, lively, of noble birth, but destitute of fortune, the young Pole was not long in dis-

covering the flattering destiny that courted his acceptance, nor slow in improving his advantage. Courtiers are, by vanity and interest, rendered quick-sighted to the conduct of their superiors: the motions of Catherine were again watched, her sentiments developed, and insinuations respecting them conveyed to the empress. A lax morality was possibly considered by Elizabeth as a regal privilege; or, what is yet more probable, she might feel inclined to expiate, by a rigid attention to the conduct of others, the total negligence of her own. Having heard with indignation of the irregularities of the duchess, she sent orders to Poniatoffsky to quit Russia without delay; a mandate which it was not thought prudent to resist.

The chancellor, in caballing against the grand-duke, had neglected nothing to strengthen his interest by that of the duchess, to whom his devotion had become daily more apparent. Forgetting his share in the ruin of Soltikoff, Catherine was induced to use, in the recovery of her second lover, the power of the man who had driven away the first. The sagacious minister began to suspect, whether it would be politic to thwart the inclinations of the duchess, and provoke her to give him a succession of rivals; in the influence

of a foreigner, he wisely concluded, he had less to dread than in that of a Russian: impressed with this notion, he hesitated not to promise the aid demanded by Catherine, nor to take measures for the fulfilment of his engagement. This he contrived to effect by a negociation with Bruhl, the minister of Poland, with whom he was closely connected. Through the machinations of these politicians, and in opposition to the Polish laws, by which it was enacted, that no Pole should be charged at a foreign court with the affairs of Saxony, Poniatoffsky was decorated publicly with the order of the white-eagle, and, soon after, by a secret council, declared minister-plenipotentiary of the republic and king of Poland, to Elizabeth empress of Russia. The indignation of the patriot Poles, who were not aware that the new plenipotentiary was devoted to the politics of England and Prussia, was excited on this occasion.

Bruhl, become the patron of Poniatoffsky, omitted nothing that might justify his choice. Through the lavish bounty of Elizabeth to her friends and favourites, a secret uneasiness, under a magnificent exterior, pervaded the Russian court; under the penury of which the grand-duke and his consort languished. Bruhl, to

whom these circumstances were known, remitted to the plenipotentiary six thousand ducats, with which he might, on pressing emergencies, relieve the embarrassments, and conciliate the confidence, of the ducal pair. Poniatoffsky profited by the sagacity and liberality of the minister; the predilection of Catherine rendered his task easy; nor was he long in gaining the favour of the duke. With Peter he drank, smoked, talked English and German, reviled the French, and extolled the king of Prussia with long and lavish encomiums. The Poles and even the Russians penetrated his designs, and complained, that to his own private views he was sacrificing the duties of his office. Nor were they mistaken. In a luxurious, dissolute, intriguing court, every thing was possible to sagacity and address.

The hours of the empress were alternately occupied by superstition and voluptuousness. The grand-duchess, corrupted by her situation, and forgetful of the counsels of her mother, gave the reins to her inclinations: the chancellor, the English embassador, and the gallant Poniatoffsky, were her directors and guides. To the Pole she devoted herself with so little reserve, that their connection became the theme of popular animadversion. After some months, Catherine was de-

livered of a daughter, the princess Anne, who survived little more than a year.

The duke alone was ignorant of what was passing: young, uninformed, without counsellors or friends, kept at a distance from business, confined to the company of his Holsteiners, and to the exercise of his German guards, his enemies, without difficulty, effected their views. Robbed of the favour of his aunt, and supplanted in the affections of his consort, when suspicion and fear seized on his mind, artificial exhilaration, to which he had recourse, afforded him a temporary relief. Devoted to idolatry to the king of Prussia, the circumstances by which he was surrounded escaped his observation; while, with minute attention, he was servilely copying the dress, the tone, and the manners, of his favourite hero. His soldiers were harassed with painful exercises and useless manœuvres: from these he repaired to the table, where, in the frensy of intoxication, he emulated, in visions of future conquests, the triumphs of the warlike Frederick.

Bestucheff, while calumniating Peter, and flattering Catherine in the prospect of her accession to power, intent only on his own aggrandisement, forgot the interests of the state: his colleagues in the ministry, creatures for the most part devot-

ed to his views, implicitly followed the direction of their leader. The people, though not insensible to the disorders of the court, reverenced in the empress, whose vices they overlooked, the lineage of the great Peter, the hero of the nation.

An army, consisting of forty thousand Russians, commanded by general Apraxin, had been ordered by the empress to assist Maria Theresa in reconquering Silesia from the Prussian monarch. The grand-duke, distressed at this attack on his favourite, applied to the chancellor to recal the troops. Elizabeth at this crisis falling sick, the path to the throne seemed opening to Peter: Bestucheff, on this prospect, sacrificed to ambition his hatred to the duke and the honour of the empire. Apraxin received orders to abandon his conquests, and to hasten his return. The empress, reviving, suspected treachery: the general was called upon to justify his conduct, which he did by producing the orders of the chancellor. Bestucheff, become the dupe of his own cupidity, was removed from his offices and put under arrest. Count Vorontzaff succeeded to his office and employments.

Previous to this revolution, the enemies of Bestucheff had, as a means of effecting his ruin, determined to foment the discord between the ducal pair, and to charge on the original mover of

their disunion whatever consequences might ensue. With this view the attention of Peter was roused to the conduct of his wife; her interviews with Poniatoffsky were remarked, their gestures watched, and their expressions analysed. The conversation one evening at table, where Catherine was seated opposite to her lover, chanced to turn on horsemanship, the dexterity of some women in this exercise, and the dangers to which it exposed them. Catherine, her eyes turned towards Poniatoffsky, replied with vivacity, that her courage was unbounded, and few women were so bold as herself. This expression, tortured and exaggerated, was reported to the duke, to which suggestions were added calculated to rouse his suspicions. His jealousy thus awakened, no time was lost to confirm his fears. Peter, overwhelmed with vexation, condemned his own imprudence, bewailed his fate, and, no longer observing the respect towards the duchess with which he had hitherto treated her, forbade her to be seen with the Pole; while hastening to the empress, he implored her to avenge the affront he had suffered. He informed her at the same time, that the misconduct of the duchess had been favoured by the chancellor, who had also abused her imperial confidence. At the conclusion of this address, the

order sent by Bestucheff for the recal of the troops from Silesia had been displayed. Thus had the fall of the chancellor been prepared: deprived of his offices, he was tried, found guilty, and condemned to death. This sentence was however softened by Elizabeth, who contented herself with banishing him to an estate beyond Moscow.

Catherine, with every thing to apprehend from the resentment of her husband, now beheld herself completely deserted: her most assiduous parasites were the first to forsake her in her distress: sustained only by her own courage, she determined to essay the powers of her address, and to demand of the empress an audience. This request being rejected, she applied to the embassador of France, whose influence at court gave her hopes of success through his mediation: to him she represented her distress and her contrition, and entreated him to speak in her behalf to the empress. The embassador, having replied with respect, and given her such counsel as appeared to him most prudent, declined any farther interference. The situation of Catherine, whom the consciousness of innocence could not support, was, on receiving this reply, sufficiently humiliating. Poniatoffsky, not less disquieted than his mistress, had received from Warsaw letters of recal, with-

out being able to resolve on quitting Russia. Feigning sickness, he confined himself during the day to his hotel, and, under the obscurity of the evening, repaired to the apartments of the grand-duchess. Malice and suspicion are not to be disarmed or evaded; the assignations of the lovers were discovered, and information conveyed to the empress.

By the return of summer, these difficulties were increased: Catherine was obliged to accompany her husband to Oranienbaum; and Poniatoffsky reduced to invention and disguise for access to the palace. Thus circumstanced, he was one day sauntering through one of the walks in the grounds where the duchess had appointed to meet him, when a domestic recognised him through his disguise, and ran to acquaint the duke of his discovery. Peter, willing to mortify his rival, commissioned a Russian officer, of a robust and athletic figure, to seize on the Pole unawares, and to bring him before him. The officer, on accosting the person pointed out to him, interrogated him roughly respecting his name and business. Poniatoffsky, thus taken by surprise, stammered out an incoherent excuse, which implyed that he was a German taylor, and that he came to mea-

sure an Holstein officer. 'My orders,' replied the Russ, 'are to bring you before the grand-duke.'—'You must allow me,' returned the Pole, 'to decline the honour, though my fortune should depend upon it.—I am in haste, and have not a moment to spare.' 'Oh, as to that matter,' rejoined his sturdy antagonist, 'whether you have time or not, you must follow me.' Having thus said, and observing his reluctance, he made a slip-knot in his handkerchief, which he threw over the neck of his captive, and thus dragged him to the feet of his master. Peter, seeing Poniatoffsky brought like a criminal before him, affected an angry air, and, in a feigned passion, rated the officer for his mistake. This adventure, with which he afterwards amused himself, he failed not to relate in the presence of the duchess.

It was about this period, that Peter, retaliating upon his wife, formed a connection with the third daughter of the senator Vorontzoff, brother to the new chancellor. The youngest of these sisters was the princess Dashkoff, whose talents, activity, and courage, became afterwards so conspicuous. The favourite of the duke, inferior to her sisters both in beauty and endowments, captivated the affections of Peter by her cheerfulness and good

humour; while the father, an abject and ambitious courtier, connived at the dishonour of his daughter.

The health of the empress was evidently declining; her infirmities, added to her natural indolence, rendered her more than ever negligent of the affairs of government; the remnant of her strength and spirits was wasted in dissipation. The idle tales of the irregularities of her nephew were, in this situation, listened to by Elizabeth with eager credulity: she seemed to seek in these accounts some palliation of her own excesses; while she treated the duke with indifference and coldness. Catherine, conceiving this to be a favourable opportunity for conciliating the empress, threw herself at her feet, and implored forgiveness. As a condition of accommodation, proposals the most humiliating were made to her, by which a confession of guilt was exacted of her, and submission to the clemency of her husband and his aunt. Pride forbidding her acquiescence in these demands, she withdrew herself from court, and kept close in her apartment, whence, aware of the refusal of her request, she demanded permission to retire to Germany. The tenderness of Elizabeth for the young Paul Petrovitch would not suffer her to consent to the de-

parture of his mother; of which a declaration of the illegitimacy of her child appeared a probable consequence.

This stratagem, proving successful, was soon followed by an accommodation. At the instant when Catherine, in the apprehension of the court, stood on the precipice of disgrace and ruin, she appeared suddenly at the theatre by the side of the empress, whose attentions drew on her the notice of the spectators. The duchess had, in a private conference, promised to resign her lover, and thenceforward to conduct herself with greater reserve. But Poniatoffsky, who almost immediately demanded his audience of leave, still found pretences for lingering in Petersburgh.

The cabal of Bestucheff had not been broken by his disgrace; the enemies of Peter continued to prejudice him in the favour of his aunt, whose various infirmities afforded them opportunities of insinuating the impatience of the heir. Cruelly wounded by this idea, Elizabeth suffered menaces to escape her respecting the succession. By some it was supposed, that she meditated to restore to his inheritance prince Ivan, dethroned by her twenty years before, and still languishing away life in a dungeon: by others it was believed, with greater probability, that it was her intention to

supplant the duke by his infant son. A few days afterwards*, Peter being at Oranienbaum, a new play was ordered by the empress, to which, contrary to the usual custom, neither the foreign ministers nor the courtiers were invited. The grand-duchess, her son, and the favourites of Elizabeth, were her only attendants. No sooner had the empress entered her box, than, complaining of the thinness of the house, she ordered the soldiers of her guard to be admitted. In a moment the theatre was full. Taking in her arms the infant Paul Petrovitch, Elizabeth presented him to these veterans, to whom she had been indebted for the imperial dignity, with lavish praises; while she fondly pointed out to the audience his engaging smiles, his striking aspect, with the virtues and qualities which his physiognomy seemed to indicate. To this address, which appeared to implore of the soldiers support and attachment for the child, they replied with shouts of reiterated applause. A step farther, and Peter had been excluded from the throne for ever: but the empress stopped short, seated herself, and the piece proceeded. This measure was

* December, 1762.

probably intended by Elizabeth either to prepare the way for more solemn and decisive proceedings, or to intimidate the duke, by shewing him the extent of her power. This transaction gave rise to various reflections, but the purposes of the empress, of whatever nature, were by death rendered ineffectual.

A short time after the scene at the theatre, her maladies sensibly increased: the intoxicating portions to which, in the hope of alleviating her sufferings, she had continually recourse, served but to hasten the catastrophe: it was visible to every one that her end rapidly approached. The interested and ambitious, in expectation of this event, concentrated their strength by forming themselves into bands, which at length divided into two great parties. The first consisted of the friends of Bestucheff, who adhered to Catherine, of which count Ivan Ivanovitch Schuvaloff was considered as chief. Schuvaloff, whose rapacity had rendered him obnoxious to the Russian merchants, and whose insolence had disgusted the grand-duke, dreaded his vengeance, and eagerly embraced the cause of his opponents. It was proposed by this faction, in adherence to the plan chalked out by Bestucheff, that Peter * should be elected sovereign,

* Bestucheff scarcely dared to hope the complete disinheritance of Peter, but he wished to banish him to the camps and armies, and to place Catherine at the head of affairs.

while the regency was to be invested in the grand-duchess, under the authority of a council, in which Schuvaloff modestly intended to preside. Though secretly irritated by his presumption, Catherine, prompted by fear and ambition, seconded the plan: carefully concealing her thirst of power, she veiled her purposes under an affected indifference. To her confidents she repeated perpetually, that the title of mother of the emperor would always be preferred by her to that of his consort; neither did she conceal her dread of the resentment of a husband, to whom her infidelities were but too apparent.

The party by whom the rights of the grand duke were defended, was headed by Vorontzoff, an aspiring but sordid courtier, whose daughter was the avowed mistress of Peter. His access to the duke afforded him opportunities of insinuation against the duchess, whose errors and faults he failed not to aggravate. Having gained the confidence of his master, it was not difficult for Vorontzoff to direct his actions. The moment the eyes of the empress were closed, it was determined that Peter should assemble the troops, cause himself to be proclaimed, repudiate the duchess, declare her son to be illegitimate, and publicly espouse the daughter of Vorontzoff. To the success of this enterprise every thing appeared to concur; the grand-duke, however obnoxious

at court, was respected by the people, who regarded him as the descendant of Peter the Great: his friends also expected to be furnished by England with considerable sums.

In these circumstances, and amidst these intrigues, there suddenly appeared a man who undertook to conciliate the opposing parties. Nikita Ivanovitch, count Panin, had, at this period, just returned from Stockholm, where he had resided in a diplomatic capacity. Panin had from an obscure station been raised to dignity and office; his talents, originally moderate, were but little improved; but, supplying by cunning the want of ability, he considered nothing too arduous or too difficult to attempt. With more presumption than knowledge, his judgments were frequently erroneous; to gain time, to procrastinate, and to trust to accident, were his favourite maxims, and the basis of his sagacity. He had been taught by his residence in Sweden to worship, as the perfection of government, an aristocracy with the forms of a senate: the remaining traits of his character were indolence, inaccuracy, and a passion for gossipping. He had been appointed preceptor to the young Paul, and had now to determine his election between the grand-duke and his consort. The interest of Catherine having prevailed, he

was admitted into the plan of wresting the sceptre from her husband, an enterprise of which he foresaw all the danger. Opposed to these apprehensions was his dread lest the duchess, hurled from the throne and bed of the emperor, should in her disgrace overwhelm his pupil. Under these ideas, he eagerly sought for measures of compromise and conciliation. For this purpose, he endeavoured, by addressing himself to their mutual fears, to engage the factions in mutual concessions, and to bring about a coalition. His plan was to seat Peter on the throne by a proclamation of the senate, who, while they affixed limits to his power, might secure the authority to Catherine and her son. The project once conceived, he proceeded to execution with a prudence, a reserve, an activity, that formed an exception to his general habits. His purpose was veiled even from Catherine herself, whose party he affected to abandon.

Having sheltered himself from all suspicion, he secretly resorted to Ivan Schuvaloff, who, shuddering at the responsibility he had incurred, had abandoned himself to the most poignant anxiety: the project of which he was considered as leader, had been originally conceived by Peter his cousin, an enterprising and ambitious man, whom a mortal sickness was conducting to the grave. The

timidity of Ivan, so favourable to the design of Panin, he failed not to turn to his advantage. Convinced by the sagacity of Panin, who painted in aggravated colours the difficulties and hazards of the enterprise, Ivan, unable to refute his reasoning, hastened to the chamber of his brother. Peter Schuvaloff, whose mind sickness had debilitated, yielded without difficulty to the remonstrances which assailed him. But, in relinquishing his plans, he was still solicitous to play a principal part. For this purpose, he sent to the grand-duke a humble message, intimating that he had important secrets to communicate, and intreating to be honoured with his presence.

On the arrival of the duke, he was addressed by Schuvaloff, who received him reclining on a couch, with the solemnity of a man who feeling himself on the brink of the grave, where human passions are extinguished, has no longer occasion for evasion or reserve. He represented to Peter in strong terms the critical situation in which he stood, the snares which beset his path, and the conciliating measures it would behove him to adopt. He conjured him to reflect seriously on the calamitous consequences of repudiating the duchess, and raising to her place a woman regarded with general contempt; a step which could not fail to

cover him with dishonour, and to which he would eventually become a victim.

Peter, who had not listened to this discourse without emotion, denied the design imputed to him of dissolving his marriage, a step which he affected strongly to reprobate. 'It was true,' he added, 'that his mistress, misled by vanity, might give credit to these reports, but she was a simpleton, whom he had never purposed to marry but in case of the demise of the duchess.' This asseveration was by no means calculated to give confidence to his auditor; but, desirous of promoting an accommodation, he chose not to take umbrage, and professed himself satisfied by a promise from the duke, that he would blot from his memory the machinations against him.

A more important and a more difficult enterprise still remained to be executed. The dying empress, whose fears had been artfully roused, lest the ambition of her nephew should tempt him to hasten her fate, had excluded him from her apartment, to which she was now confined. This prohibition had, to avoid a too pointed singularity, been extended to the duchess. The knowledge of these divisions in the imperial family was yet confined within the palace; its farther circulation was pregnant with danger. Had

Elizabeth expired without admitting to her presence the duke and his consort, those ill-founded suspicions, in which her caution originated, would have found credit with the people; it became therefore important to soften this prejudice. Ivan Schuvaloff, who, by his office as grand-chamberlain, was about the person of the empress, was conceived by Panin to be a proper agent on this occasion: but the timid chamberlain, from various motives, declined to interfere. Panin had then, with better success, recourse to a monk, the confessor of Elizabeth, with whom mingled motives of interest and duty finally prevailed.

Every precaution of time and circumstance being judiciously arranged, the priest discoursed with his penitent on invisible things: the joys of heaven were eloquently pourtrayed, while charity, forgiveness, and mercy, were enumerated among the terms of admission. In the midst of this harangue, and at the moment when the orator had obtained from his hearer a signal of assent, Catherine entered, led by the duke, when they prostrated themselves beside the bed of the empress. Elizabeth, dictated to by the priest, declared to her suiters, in a voice exhausted and scarcely articulate, 'that she had always loved them, and that with her dying breath she wished them every blessing.' This sufficed;

the pair withdrew, and their partisans took care to circulate what had passed.

Panin, elate with his services, and the consequence they had given him with the duke, believed that he should induce him blindly to adopt his views, and to receive, on the demise of the empress, his crown from the senate. With this presumption, he laid before him his project with all its advantages. Peter, moved by his representations, was about to yield to the impression they had produced, when they were interrupted by the entrance of two of the courtiers. One of them, on hearing the plan of Panin, struck by the insidious nature of the measure proposed, counselled the duke to submit the decision to the prince Trubetskoi, whom age and experience rendered a competent judge. The prince, when consulted, objected to the project, with the boldness of a soldier jealous of the honour of his master, and prejudiced against the novelty of the proceeding. He represented, with firmness and energy, the military tenor of the government, the danger of innovation, the ambition of the senate lurking under patriot pretences, and the probable disgust and vengeance of the army. Captivated by the novelty of the counsel of Panin, and intimidated by the presages of Trubetskoi, the purpose of

Peter appeared to waver. In this dilemma, he dispatched a chamberlain to consult the grand-duchess.

Catherine, roused by the impending fate of the empress, and intent on conciliating popular favour, had covered her ambition under the mask of religion: her time was chiefly occupied in frequenting the churches, in performing the exteriors of devotion, and in joining the prayers for the restoration of Elizabeth. Ignorant of the views of Panin for her interest, of which he had imprudently neglected to inform her, she had, for the last few days, employed herself in drawing up the form of the proclamation by which Peter was to be appointed to the sovereign power, with the oath to be taken by the troops. Priding herself on the elegance of her style and composition, and anticipating the admiration which her performance would excite, she chose not to sacrifice her labours. An abrupt reply was therefore returned to the message of the duke, importing, that he would do well to conform to the established custom.

At the moment Peter received this answer, the death of Elizabeth was announced, who expired, after a tedious illness and severe sufferings, on Christmas-day, 1761. This event was scarcely

known, when the courtiers crowded around the heir, to whom the importance of the moment gave a temporary firmness. Having addressed with dignity the venal herd, and received the oaths of the officers of his guard, he mounted on horseback, and rode through the streets of Petersburg, distributing money among the populace. The soldiers, flocking about him, exclaimed, 'If thou take care of us, we will serve thee with the same fidelity with which we served the good empress, thy predecessor.' The shouts of the people mingled with their acclamations, nor did any symptoms of discontent manifest themselves upon the occasion. The satisfaction of Peter was apparent on his delivery from the severe constraint in which he had so long been held, but he betrayed no signs of indecent joy.

If, in ascending the throne of his ancestors, he met with no opposition, his elevation was beheld with a passive acquiescence, rather than with cheerful attachment: the public was distrustful, the court reserved, and in his own family all was cold. The Russians were averse to foreign masters, a prejudice fostered by the late empress, and which various circumstances had combined to strengthen. The duke, though grandson to Peter the Great, was a native of Holstein; he had not long been

a resident in Russia, to the manners of which he was obnoxious. His heart was in Holstein, and the Germans possessed his confidence; to the concerns of the empire, from which he had been held aloof, he was cold and repugnant. He had disapproved of the participation of Russia in the German war; he was suspected of a design of new-modelling the nation; of using its force for the aggrandisement of Holstein; of dividing himself from his family, and securing his inheritance to a paternal relation. The attention of those who had wished to exclude him from the succession, was directed to his consort, who, with more sagacity, had, by assimulating herself to its customs, courted the affection of the nation.

Such, on the accession of Peter to the imperial crown, was the temper of the people. In the proclamation which announced this event to the empire, no mention was made of Catherine or her son, an omission which to some appeared to presage the overthrow of the lineal succession: neither was there any preparation for the coronation at Mosco; a solemnity, rendered by its usage and antiquity, highly impressive to the Russians. Blinded by his infatuation for the king of Prussia, Peter, while yet tottering on the throne, inconsiderately proposed to quit the king-

dom, and, for the gratification of an interview with Frederic, to repair to Germany.

Yet, in the minds of the candid, these imprudences would have been more than outweighed by the promise of magnanimity which appeared in his conduct: fully aware of his enemies, he avenged himself on no one; acts of beneficence and justice signalised his succession; he seemed, on his advancement to power, like Henry V. of England, to assume a new character. Reflection succeeded to passion; to fury and violence, gentleness and humanity: as if enlightened by the importance of his station, he shewed himself in an instant patient, rational, and just. He exercised his kindness to all who had been attached to Elizabeth; he forgave his enemies, and continued in their post almost every great officer of state. Peter Schuvaloff, who, long confined to his bed, expired soon after, he raised to the rank of field-marshal. To Alexey Razumuffsky, the favourite of the late empress, with whom he had often injured him, he left the place of *grand-veneur* *. Even on Ivan Schuvaloff, who had so unworthily used his influence, he conferred favours and benefits. Prince Shususkoi, of whom

* Chief huntsman.

he had the most to complain, was but simply removed from his office, while his liberty and possessions were left to him. Catherine, who could not think without terror of the advancement of her husband, and who dreaded the severest measures, received from him, with marks of confidence, the most flattering salutations. In the endowments of her mind, and the powers of her genius, he appeared to forget the irregularities of her conduct; he passed in her apartments a part of every day, conversed with her in confidence, and consulted her judgment on affairs of importance. The courtiers, astonished, congratulated her on her lot: Catherine only was not elated; aware of the incapacity of her husband, she perceived through his gentleness and docility a real weakness.

The first measures of Peter were popular and auspicious: to the Russian nobility and gentry he gave freedom; he also recalled the state-prisoners, with which jealousy and despotism had peopled Siberia. Among those whom the vengeance of Elizabeth and an iniquitous trial had exiled, appeared the celebrated marshal Munich, who was met on his return, at the age of eighty-two, by one of his sons, who still survived, and thirty-two of his posterity. The venerable exile, habit-

ed in the sheep-skin he had worn in the deserts, and surrounded by his family, presented himself to the emperor, who, addressing him in a tone of kindness, hastily restored to him his rank of field-marshal, with the badges of the order of St. Andrew. 'I hope,' said Peter, 'notwithstanding your advanced age, you may still serve me.' 'Since your majesty,' replied Munich, 'has brought me from darkness to light, and from the depths of a cavern to the foot of the throne, my life is devoted to you. Neither Siberian deserts, nor a tedious exile, have cooled my ardour for the interest of Russia, or for the glory of its princes.' These affecting scenes afforded to the nation a delightful spectacle, while the empire resounded with the praises of its benefactor.

To transports so delicious a new subject of reverence was added, when the czar, entering the senate in imperial state, affranchised the nobles from the servitude in which his predecessors had held them; allowed them to travel, to carry arms or to refrain, at their own discretion. In the excess of their gratitude, it was proposed by the nobility, to erect to their monarch a statue of gold; but this enthusiasm was transient as fervent.

A more important obligation which Russia

owes to Peter, was the abolition of the inquisition, that dreadful tribunal, the insult of reason, and the scourge of humanity, which had in Russia been environed with aggravated terrors.

For the apparent contradictions in the character of the czar, we must revert to the defects of his education, which stifling, in their birth, the qualities of his heart, suffered them to appear but on extraordinary emergences.

Gudovitch, a young Ukrainer, who had served the grand-duke in quality of aide-de-camp, was attached to his person, and the only man among the courtiers by whom he was sincerely beloved. To the counsels of this virtuous youth, those measures so glorious and dignified, which threw a transient lustre over the commencement of the reign of Peter, are principally to be attributed. The ordinary habits of the czar, dazzled by the elevation, and influenced by the ascendancy of a more vigorous genius, suffered a temporary suspension; but, corrupted by power, he quickly relapsed into indolence and vice.

Having for several days been shut up with his mistress, and the companions of his riots, abandoned to intemperate excesses, he was suddenly roused from his voluptuous dream by the appearance of his friend and monitor: 'It is now,' said

Gudovitch, in a stern voice, and with a severe aspect, addressing the emperor simply by his name, 'it is now that I plainly perceive you prefer to us the enemies of your glory, to whom you are irrecoverably subjugated. You justify their assertion, that low and degrading pleasures are more suited to your capacity than the government of a great empire. Is it thus that you emulate your grandsire, the hero whom you swore to take for your model? Is it thus you persevere in the magnanimous conduct by which you were about to gain the hearts of your people? Is their attachment, their applause, already forgotten? By the murmurs of discontent, their acclamations are even now succeeded. Petersburg, with anxiety, enquires whether her monarch has ceased to live within her walls. The empire trembles, lest, in the hope of seeing revive laws that shall renew its vigor and glory, it has cherished a vain expectation. Faction raises her head anew, and the malignant only triumph. Shake off this disgraceful lethargy of soul, and hasten to testify, by an act of resplendent virtue, that you are yet worthy of realising the hopes of a nation!'

To this address, to the boldness and virtue of the speaker, were the nobles indebted for their affranchisement, and the people for the abolition

of the terrors of the inquisition. Abashed, confounded, and desirous of compensating for his relapse, Peter seized from the hands of his Mentor the declarations already prepared, and hurried to the senate. The murmurs of the people gave place to joy; it was believed, with fond credulity, that the occupation of their sovereign during his retirement had been the framing these salutary edicts.

The administration of justice, the forms of jurisprudence, commerce, the sciences and arts, became alternately the objects of royal attention: the emperor visited the colleges, assisted at their deliberations, and animated them by encouragement and reward. Docile to the counsel of his invaluable friend, and emulous of the Prussian monarch, he gave audience to every one, received the petitions of his people, and administered personal justice. He laboured to obtain the confidence of the nation, and to conquer their prejudices. Even his enemies applauded a conduct that called to their recollection, in lively images, the memory of his great predecessor. He received the foreign ministers with a propriety and dignity that commanded admiration: he gave to them a splendid repast, was reserved in his discourse, and temperate in his indulgences. Fo-

reigners vied with the natives in his praise; even Vienna was restored to a temporary confidence.

Incapable of dissimulation, among the sentiments retained by Peter in his elevation, attachment to the king of Prussia still predominated, of which he afforded various testimonies. Count de Hordt, a Swedish officer, to whom, with the Prussian prisoners detained at Petersburg, he had given freedom, was received into his friendship and confidence, and laden with benefits and distinctions. Hordt had been a victim to the vengeance of Elizabeth, who had thus retaliated the execution of a Russ officer, condemned by the king of Prussia, for a plan of revolt and massacre, in the garrison of Custrin, where he was confined. When Hordt related to the czar the story of his captivity, and added, that, independent of the base treatment to which he was subjected, he had been denied the use of books, Catherine, who was present, suddenly exclaimed, 'How barbarous this!' Peter, in his correspondence with the Prussian monarch, addressed him by the titles of his 'dear brother,' his 'worthy master;' he even reminded him of the honour he had enjoyed in serving in his army, and requested to be advanced to a higher post.

'To take advantage of his devotion, and to in-

crease his ardor for the favour solicited, Frederic deferred for a time to comply with his request; but at length informed him, that, as a recompence for his military merit, rather than as a compliment to his rank, he was appointed major-general. The czar, transported by this intelligence, manifested his joy by the most extravagant excesses. This Prussian mania, which offended the foreign ministers, gave umbrage to the courtiers, and afforded a pretext to his enemies, did credit to the intentions of Peter rather than to his judgment.

Deficient in the strength and firmness of character indispensable to the ruler of a great nation, he mingled with his best plans and most popular measures, frivolous appendages or a pernicious weakness. In the rage for improvement, ignorant of the art and delicacy necessary to be observed in attacking established errors, he hazarded premature reformations. By waging war against the church, and diminishing its vast possessions, he irritated, in a superstitious and barbarous nation, a formidable race of men. Always suspected of lutheranism, the retrenchment of the privileges of the clergy, however exorbitant, was construed into contempt for the national church: this notion, propagated with industry by his enemies,

was corroborated by other circumstances. The preference of their sovereign to the German soldiers disgusted the Russian troops. The noble guards, by whom Elizabeth had been seated on the throne, were disbanded, the horse guards deprived of their office, and Holsteiners substituted in their place. The introduction of the Prussian exercise, which was yet to be learned, could not fail to displease the army. To these were added other causes of military disgust, by which the troops were angered and alienated. Changes the most beneficial were thus, through the medium of prejudice and jealousy, regarded with discontent and distrust.

Of these transactions, with the progress of the reformations, the king of Prussia was scrupulously informed, who, in return for the confidence of the czar, gave him prudent counsels, calculated, had he known how to observe them, for his advantage and security. Sanguine and incapable of mistrust, Peter was little careful to conciliate the malecontents, but trusted (a poor defence!) in the purity of his intentions, and in the protection of Heaven. Happy had it been for the czar, had he suffered himself to be governed by the advice, or implicitly taken for his example, the hero whom

he professed to emulate! But for native sagacity and firmness what can be a substitute?

Insensibly relaxing in his great designs, the offspring of an effervescent fancy rather than the dictates of a sound judgment, Peter resumed, amidst a society of treacherous parasites, his habits of intemperance; whole days were passed in smoking, or sunk in an odious inebriety. His behaviour towards his consort became capricious and unequal; while the powers of her understanding extorted his homage, he failed not to intimate his sense of her irregularities, and the resentment with which they had inspired him. At the splendid festivals of the Russian church, he was impolitically content to follow as a simple colonel in the suite of Catherine, who, adorned with the symbols of regal dignity, appeared with majesty as if born to command. Catherine was also left to do the honours of the court, while the czar, habited in the uniform of his regiment, respectfully presented to her his officers and comrades. If the great Peter had with Catherine I. acted a similar part, it is heroes and men of talents only, that, possessing an inherent dignity, may venture to disdain adventitious advantages.

But the favour of the empress was of short

duration; no sooner did Peter believe himself firmly seated on the throne, than his indifference towards his consort was manifest, of which he sometimes gave her humiliating proofs. During the exhibition of fireworks, on the celebration of the peace with Prussia, Catherine was seated by the side of the czar, when Peter, perceiving his mistress pass by, called to her, and placed her on his other hand. The empress, on this indignity, retired, nor was any motion made to detain her. The same evening, at supper, Peter drank to the health of prince George of Holstein; the company rose to do honour to the toast, while Catherine, pretending to have hurt her foot, still kept her seat. Irritated at what he construed into a failure of respect towards his uncle, the czar expressed his indignation towards the empress by a coarse and opprobrious epithet, which drew tears from her eyes. Catherine, for some minutes after this affront, conversed in a low voice with her chamberlain, Stroganoff, who was believed to be high in her favour; and whom she had the mortification to see almost immediately put under an arrest. Her tears affected the spectators, whom the harshness of Peter had disgusted.

From scenes of this nature the hopes of the empress revived; she determined to oppose to

the imprudence of her husband great circumspection and address. Versed in dissimulation, it was not difficult for her to act a part, while she employed herself in gaining the hearts the czar was alienating. For philosophy she substituted the demeanor of a bigot, while, repairing daily to the churches, she prayed with the semblance of a sincere devotee: punctual in the observances of the Greek superstitions, she accosted the poor with benignity, and affected homage to the patriarchs, who failed not, from house to house, to proclaim her praises. While Peter was shut up with his favourites and mistress, the companion of debauchees and buffoons, the empress kept her court with mingled dignity and sweetness, charming all who approached her. It was her study to attract towards her every man distinguished for his talents or courage, or whose intrigues promised to be useful.

The czar, in the mean time, offended the Russians by his indiscretions, and disgusted the foreign ministers. In his enthusiasm for the king of Prussia, and in the eagerness with which he put an end to the war, he abandoned his former confederates, and even agreed to join his favourites against them. A Russian army was shortly seen, driving out of Silesia, in conjunction with the Prussians,

those Austrians who, but a few months before, it had brought into the province. By such measures, of which he had not deigned to inform the ambassadors, who received through the gazettes the first intelligence, he filled the foreign courts with displeasure and distrust.

On the celebration of the peace with Prussia, when extraordinary magnificence was displayed, Peter appeared clothed in a Prussian uniform, decorated with the black eagle, the order of which had been conferred on him by Frederic. Scarce a day passed, during these festivities, that was not concluded with a debauch; excesses which were usually productive of dangerous indiscretions. Towards the end of these rejoicings, an insulting message was sent to the Austrian minister, implying a threat of sending a force into Germany, to compel Maria-Theresa to relinquish her pretensions. Every thing appeared to announce great changes; the king of Prussia, secure of the aid of Peter, formed the most ambitious projects; when a sudden catastrophe frustrated his expectations, and wrought, in the politics of the north, a grand revolution.

In the midst of his feasts and warlike preparations, the czar had not been unmindful of the countess of Vorontzoff, whose ascendancy over

him daily increased: this woman, aspiring in her temper, but of mean talents, aimed, under the tutorage of an ambitious father, to raise herself to the imperial throne. By alternate caresses, frowardice, and flattery, she induced her lover to renew the promise, made when he was grand-duke, of endowing her with the privileges, and placing her in the seat of Catherine. Led by her vanity to boast of this engagement, she found in her imprudence her disappointment and ruin. Her present influence, with the future prospects of which she dared to vaunt, roused the partisans of the empress, with whom the enemies of her husband united their force. Peter, not less weak and vain, authorised, by his conduct, the boast of his mistress; he no longer affected to conceal his projects against his wife, which involved in them a declaration of the illegitimacy of her son. To cover his conduct with a pretence of justice, and to secure universal consent, he believed he had only to produce testimonies of the infidelities of the empress. The countess, apprised by her father of the first amour of Catherine with Soltikoff, had not failed to convey her intelligence to the czar, who, upon this information, grounded his proofs. Soltikoff, recalled from Hamburg, where he had been appointed minister, was load-

ed with benefits, and destined by Peter as an instrument in his views. Seduced by the hope of reward, or intimidated by the fear of consequences, he was, without difficulty, rendered subservient to the wishes of his master, who hesitated only while he should choose a successor.

In the course of his meditations on this subject, a singular project suggested itself to his mind: he resolved to adopt as his heir, prince Ivan, supplanted by Elizabeth while yet in his cradle, and detained, during her reign, in close confinement. With this design, the czar, accompanied by a few attendants, went privately to the fortress of Schlusselburg, the prison of Ivan, of whose fitness for his purpose he was desirous of judging. Concealing his rank, and attended only by three officers of state, Peter obtained, through an order signed with the imperial signet (by which the commandant was enjoined to allow the bearers freely to inspect the fortress), an entrance into the dungeon. The better to disguise himself, one of his officers, a tall commanding figure, was instructed to assume a superior air. Ivan having for some moments attentively remarked the unusual visitors who entered his cell, suddenly threw himself at the feet of Peter: 'Czar,' exclaimed he, 'you are master here;—mitigate the severity

of my fate. Many years have I languished in this gloomy dungeon. I ask no other favour than to be permitted at times to breathe a freer air.' 'Rise, prince,' replied Peter, touched at his request, and gently striking him on the shoulder, 'suffer no anxiety for the future. All the means in my power shall be used for the melioration of your fate. But, tell me, do you recollect the misfortunes of your earlier youth?' 'Of those which befel my infancy,' returned Ivan, 'I have scarce any idea; but, from the moment I became sensible of my misery, I have not ceased to mingle my tears with those of my parents, of whose calamities I was the wretched cause. From their sufferings and ill-treatment, harassed from prison to prison, proceeded my keenest torments.' 'Ah!' exclaimed the czar, 'whence came that ill-treatment?' 'From the officers by whom we were conducted, and who were among the most barbarous of mankind.' 'Do you remember their names?' 'Alas! we were not curious to learn them; content to render, on our bended knees, thanks to Heaven, when men of a less savage temper superseded these monsters!' 'What! did you never fall into more humane hands?' '*One* only deserves to be distinguished; to him our esteem was due, and we deplored his loss:

his good-nature, his kind attentions, will never be effaced from my remembrance.' 'And you know not the name of this worthy man?' eagerly asked the czar. 'Oh, yes! I remember him well, Korff was the name he bore.'

This very man, master of the Petersburg police, was among those by whom the emperor was attended. He melted into tears at this simple testimony to his worth; while the czar, taking him by the arm, said in a broken voice, 'You see, baron, a good action is never lost.' To recover from this emotion, Peter went out with Korff and two of his officers, leaving the third with the prisoner. 'How came you hither, prince?' said this gentleman, addressing Ivan. 'Who can be secure against robbers?' replied the prince. 'An order, from whom we know not, is brought to the prison where I reside with my parents. The ruffians fall upon my family, bear me from the only persons in the world whom I knew, in whom I confided, and to whom I was dear. Alas! how piercing were my cries, how bitter my regrets! How do my family, if they yet survive, lament the fate of their son and brother!' 'What think you,' asked the officer, 'will be the fate of our new emperor?' 'To judge from my idea of the Russian character, not more happy than my

own. That foreign princes would be hated and dethroned by the treacherous and haughty Russ, was among the first lessons impressed by my parents upon my mind.'

The czar and his companions now re-entered, accompanied by the commandant, whom, in the presence of Ivan, Peter thus addressed: 'From this moment I order you to give to the prince all the satisfactions he shall require, and that he shall be allowed to walk, and to amuse himself within the precincts of the fortress. Written orders, containing farther particulars, shall be sent to you, by which your conduct is henceforth to be regulated, in what respects his sacred person.'

On coming out of the chamber, the emperor went over the fortress, and gave directions for the constructing an edifice in which to lodge the prisoner. 'Let it run,' said he, 'in a straight line, from wall to wall of this angle of the fort: let nine rooms be formed in front, and let the remaining space, to the extremity of the angle, be occupied by a garden, in which he may recreate himself, and find in the open air some alleviation to the severity of his confinement. When the building is completed, I will myself come and give him possession.'

These orders might possibly be given by the

czar to deceive the commandant respecting his real purpose; or a different object might occupy his thoughts: this edifice, in the opinion of many, was designed for Catherine. Peter paid one more more visit to the prince before he quitted Schlusselburg, whence he returned to Petersburg. No one suspected the extraordinary enterprise in which he was engaged, nor the interview so recently past. The prince of Holstein, when informed by his nephew of his visit to Schlusselburg, counselled him to send Ivan, together with his family, into Germany. To avoid suspicions of his intentions, the czar affected to approve this advice; but, for the present, contented himself with removing the prince to Kexholm, a fortress built on a small island, in the Ladoga lake, and nearer to the capital.

The unfortunate Ivan, on his passage to this place, nearly escaped being wrecked, by one of those summer storms, that, suddenly rising, dangerously agitate the lake.

The hopes of Catherine received daily accession from the imprudence of her husband, whose designs against her, though known but in part, emboldened her to dare every thing for their prevention. Dismissed to Peterhoft, she passed her days in one of its most retired apartments, where

she meditated the dethronement of Peter: her evenings were devoted to the company of an adherent, converted by her favour into an intrepid conspirator.

The power of the czars, like all despotisms, is weakly founded: resting on the opinions and prejudices of the governed, it requires to poise it a steady hand: change of manners, and a broken succession, had rendered revolutions in Russia not more difficult than sudden. The foreign nativity of Peter enhanced his danger, which his attention to foreign interests, to the prejudice of the empire, contributed to augment.

Catherine had the address, since the removal of Poniatofsky, to preserve in the eyes of the courtiers an apparent fidelity to the memory of his attachment: the new predeliction with which she consoled herself was concealed from the knowledge of her most intimate friends. M. de Breteuil, in the persuasion of her constancy, degraded his dignity as embassador, by charging himself with her correspondence with the Pole: even princess Dashkoff, while plotting with Orloff, was ignorant of his interviews with the empress; one of the most ingenious of whose women, and the least scrupulous, contrived to manage the connection.

Gregory Orloff, less indebted to birth and

education than to nature and fortune, was distinguished for courage and manly beauty. For these advantages he had been selected from a post in the artillery, while his brothers remained soldiers in the guards, as aide-de-camp to count Peter Schuvaloff, grand-master of the artillery, a vain and pompous man. The handsome and gallant aide-de-camp was favoured by one of the finest women of the court, the princess Kourakin, whose husband took umbrage at the condescension of the lady: the presuming Orloff was, in consequence, banished from the presence of his mistress, and threatened with a journey to Siberia. This adventure becoming notorious, reached the retreat of Catherine, whose curiosity was excited to see the hero, whom, though at first unknown to him, she found means to console for his loss. This mysterious interview was succeeded by several others, which led to the development of more important purposes. Orloff was, by his imperial mistress, initiated into the particulars of the conspiracy formed against the czar, of which he became an active and zealous member. By his means, his brothers, several officers, and some companies of the guards, were, without understanding the extent of the project, won over to give it their support. The licentiousness of Ca-

therine, odious and insatiable, was not confined to Orloff; but she knew how to distinguish talents and firmness, and in whom to confide her daring plans. Seated on the throne, she became the invisible, but powerful, principal of the factions formed against the czar. To the conspiracy of Bestucheff, supported by his nephew the prince of Volkonsky, united with count Panin, another was added, of which the princess Dashkoff, a girl only eighteen years of age, was the most active and spirited member. Of these factions, who acted in unison, though without the cognisance of each other, Catherine was the animating spirit.

The princess, a widow, but lately returned from Moscow, where she had been held as in exile by her husband, was destined by her family to supplant her sister in the affections of Peter: whether the lady disdained an imperial conquest, or whether the military taste of the czar, infatuated to liquor, and rendered gross by the fumes of tobacco, rendered him insensible to her charms, it is certain the project failed. To Catherine the princess became more acceptable: intrigue and the study of letters united them; according in their talents and in their pursuits, they passed whole days together. On the dismissal of

the empress to Peterhoff, her friend remained at Petersburg, the more effectually to serve her. A correspondence was kept up between them, in which the empress was informed of all that passed in the court and city, with the measures proper to adopt in circumventing the designs of the czar. Other motives, added to her friendship for the empress, might possibly combine to animate the zeal of this fair and youthful conspirator: jealous of the elevation that awaited her sister, the united interests and authority of her family proved insufficient to divert her from a cause in which, as prime mover, her ambition was interested. During her residence at Moscow she had studied the languages; while, conversant with the writings of foreign nations, she had learned to contemn the ignorance and grossness of her own. Young, ardent, inexperienced, conscious of talent, and intoxicated with vanity, she aspired to the glory of conducting a revolution, braved the resentment of her family, defied danger, and despised death.

Her taste for the literature of France had been flattered and confirmed by Odart, a Piedmontese, who in search of fortune had come to Petersburg, and who had enlisted himself in the suite of the princess. Wit and a turn for intrigue

were the characteristics of this man; qualities which endeared him to his patroness, who extolled him to the empress as a superior genius, and a man to whom she was principally indebted for her acquirements. Catherine, by these eulogiums, was induced to desire his services, and to confer on him the title of her private secretary. From this office he was raised to the honour of her confidence: a witness to the indignities she suffered from the czar, he perceived in his overthrow the only means for her escape; how this was to be accomplished, and by whom would the attempt be hazarded, became the subject of his meditations. He perceived at once the dangers and the difficulties in which the project was involved; but riches and honours opposed themselves on one side to punishment and death on the other: avarice, the darling passion of Odart, was not long in adjusting the balance. He addressed himself to the princess, who had anticipated his ideas, and who received with exultation the aid which his talents promised.

The conspirators, intoxicated with flattering hopes, promised themselves from their success the most brilliant recompence. While the views of the secretary terminated in the acquisition of

wealth, the princess aspired to a more dazzling reward: glory was her idol, which required for its gratification the gaze of an admiring world.

For the execution of the conspiracy much yet was wanting; soldiers, money, and above all a chief, who, by his name and authority, might give dignity to their measures, and whom, accustomed to manage the court and direct its intrigues, no obstacles might discourage, no disappointments dismay. The attention of the faction was turned, as men proper for their purpose, on the hetman Cyril Razumoffsky, and count Nikita Ivanovitch Panin.

The influence enjoyed by the former during the reign of Elizabeth, the familiarity of the czar, which he had the art of preserving, the post which he held, one of the first in the empire, his immense riches, and liberality towards the troops, secured his ascendancy at court, and his popularity in the army. He had little esteem for Catherine, nor did he appreciate her powers, but he adhered with fidelity to his former party. Having applauded the designs communicated to him by the princess, he assured her, without seeming to take a direct part in the conspiracy, that in case of necessity she might rely on his concurrence. When, a few days afterwards, Orloff endeavoured

to sound him on the subject, he gave him every encouragement to espouse the cause of Catherine against her husband, while he intimated that her adherents might depend on his assistance. The hetman, pleased with the rising factions, and mentally determined to give them his support, kept the secret both of Orloff and the princess, who had not yet confided their views to each other. He went yet farther: assembling his friends on the instant, without precisely informing them of what was passing, he hinted to them a plot ripening among the troops for the dethronement of the czar; to this he added, that in their neglect to declare themselves its leaders, no alternative would probably remain, but to become the forced instruments or victims of the conspiracy. His hearers anxiously enquired on what it would be proper for them to determine: 'Join me,' replied the hetman, 'the moment hostilities commence; I will take care to assign to each of you the rank to which he has a title to aspire. The blind intrepidity of some obscure persons is now meditating the blow; let us watch for the instant: should they succeed, it is for our dexterity to reap the fruit of their toils. Speak! Do you feel yourselves disposed to follow my example?'—Oaths of allegiance were mutually given and received;

and the meeting broke up in expectation of the event.

To bring over count Panin now became the business of the princess and secretary, who were earnestly recommended by Catherine to suffer nothing to remain undone that might promote their purpose: aware of the weight which, by the name and presence of the hetman, would in the commencement of the affair be thrown into the scale, she was not less anxious, for ensuring its success, to secure the experience and ability of Panin. It was he only who, by the arts of insinuation, could moderate the impetuosity of the princess, inflame the hatred of Razumoffsky, direct the avarice of Odart, and justify, in appearance, the conspiracy, by annexing to it the name of his pupil, the young grand-duke. Odart was commissioned to propose to Panin a concurrence with their designs; when, prompted by a motive more powerful than the interest of Catherine, he readily promised all that was required of him.

Prince Volkonsky, major-general of the guards, was by an application from princess Dashkoff brought over to the party, in which the archbishop of Novogorod, just recalled from exile, and irritated by his punishment, the sense of which its remission was insufficient to efface, was also engaged.

The powerful engine of superstition was employed by the prelate in aid of the conspirators: the monks under his command sowed in the hearts of their disciples the seed of disloyalty, and taught them to consider their prince as the enemy of the national church.

To secure a part of the troops, the princess Dashkoff, under pretence of paying her compliments to some officers of her acquaintance, visited the barracks. It was there she was met by Orloff, when a mutual explanation took place. The princess, flattering herself with having gained Orloff to her party, suspected not his connection with Catherine, or even that he was known to her: to her fancied acquisition, the brothers of Orloff, with many others long prepared by him for the purpose, were joined.

When Odart informed the empress of their success, of which her lover had already apprised her, she was careful not to offend the vanity of the princess by appearing to have anticipated the good tidings. One only among the factious required no management or prepossession. Gleboff, raised by the czar from the lowest form of chicane to the office of procureur-general to the senate, observing a host of foes uniting to attack his benefactor, a force which he believed he would be

unable to stem, determined to add cruelty to treachery and ingratitude, and to join his interest to that of the conspirators: looking around him for an opportunity of effecting his purpose, and having discovered the correspondence between Odart and princess Dashkoff, he hastened to proffer to them his services.

Different measures, according to their different characters, were proposed by the conspirators for effecting their common purpose. Some were for seizing the person of the czar, at the palace of Peterhoff, at the conclusion of one of those festivals which it was the custom to celebrate on the anniversary of a favourite saint: others, more ferocious, insisted on his assassination in the midst of his courtiers.

The succession, and the methods by which the place of the fallen prince should be supplied, became no less a subject of disputation. Catherine aspired to the vacant throne, and was supported in her pretensions by Orloff and the princess. That she should be permitted to govern under the title of regent, was proposed by Panin, while that of emperor should devolve on her son. With this opinion the hetman Razumoffsky coincided. Panin had the courage to remonstrate with the empress on this subject, and to point out to her

where her ambition ought to stop. He reminded her of her declarations of aspiring but to the title of mother of the emperor, of her foreign extraction, and the probable discontent of the people. 'Think you,' added he, 'that there will not be incessant plottings in favour of the descendants of the great Peter, while one of them languishes at the foot of the throne, and others are immured in loathsome dungeons? Ah! madam, yield your pretensions to what it is unlikely you should ever attain. Be satisfied with escaping the dangers that press on you, and justify the undertaking in which you are about to engage, by convincing the world that it is the interest of your son, rather than your own, which is the object of your efforts.'

The conspirators, struck with the firmness of this address, remained for some time silent. Orloff shuddered. Catherine for a few moments appeared involved in reflection, when suddenly turning towards Panin, 'Count,' said she, 'your reasoning is forcible, but my sentiments remain unaltered. I know the Russians; neither are you so unacquainted with them as not to be aware that, provided they are governed, they care but little about the origin of those by whom that government is administered. They are a people who

know nothing but obedience, even when the ruling hand presses heavily upon them. Mentchikoff, Biren, Munich, afford proofs of this assertion. It is not that I thus intend to reign; no! far from it; lenity and justice, by which my actions shall be guided, shall leave no pretence for discontent: but you, who talk to me of revolt and murmur, do you forget, that it is regencies that are most fertile in rebellion? Had Peter III. firmness to hold the reins of the empire, would the present conspiracy ever had birth? You profess alarm for my son; would you then abandon him to the caprice of a father by whom he is disavowed, rather than trust him to the affection of a tender mother? If I aspire to command, is it not for the welfare of my child? Is it not that I may be able to recompense those who, like you, aid me to defend him? Doubtless they may rely on my lasting gratitude; but, in order to testify it, must I not have power? That power I expect from you.'

Panin was not shaken by this artful address; opinions were divided, and no determined measures were fixed. The motive of Panin was sufficiently apparent; by placing his pupil on the throne, he purposed to govern in his name, and to hold the second place in the empire. Catherine, whose discernment nothing escaped, gave him pri-

vate assurances that he should be appointed first minister, an engagement which was carefully concealed from the other conspirators.

Princess Dashkoff, Orloff, and Odart, left no means untried for gaining Panin to their purpose. The sturdy preceptor resisted their joint efforts, till his ambition was assailed by a softer, but not, as it proved, less conquering passion. *Love* had enlisted in the service of Catherine the most intrepid of her adherents; and love prepared for her another victory. A beautiful female, only eighteen years of age, who becomes the member of a faction, possesses powers of persuasion not difficult to appreciate: the vivacity, the talent, the spirit of madame Dashkoff, made a powerful impression on the passions of the statesman; while frequent conferences on the subject of their common project had served but to fan the flame. It was not long before the princess became acquainted with the effect of her charms: if she received the declarations of her antiquated lover with coldness, it was not to virtue that his difficulties were owing. Revenge succeeded in the heart of the preceptor to unrequited love; while he seemed to derive a pleasure in opposing himself to the views of the author of his disappointment. Odart only, perceiving the motive of Panin's resistance, hastened

to inform the princess, who confirmed to him the truth of his conjecture. In the familiarity of confidence, and in their mutual zeal for the success of their schemes, madame Dashkoff suffered a detestable sophistry to violate delicacy, and to prevail over the feeble remains of principle which, in a profligate court, she had yet cherished. She was persuaded that virtue itself ought to yield to friendship, and that it accorded with the heroism of her character to render her charms subservient to her ambition. Convinced by arguments so contemptible, she assented to whatever was proposed, and the obstinacy of Panin melted away in the fires of love*.

The conspirators thus agreed, determined on the execution of their plan; to effect which soldiers, rather than chiefs, were wanting. It became important to gain over the guards, by which measure the czar would be left defenceless. Three companies of the regiment of Ismailoff were already seduced; but these were insufficient for their purpose, and by money only could they hope

* This account is possibly a calumny. By many persons who attended the courts of Elizabeth, Peter III. and Catherine, it is affirmed that, whatever might be the eccentricities of this lady, no imputations could, with justice (though a widow at eighteen), be thrown on her chastity.

to corrupt others. The empress, scarcely capable of supporting the expences of her household, commissioned Odart, in concert with the princess Dashkoff, to apply for a supply to M. de Bretuil*, so long her confidant and her dupe, and who was preparing to leave Petersburg. Aware of a conspiracy on foot, but ignorant of the springs which gave it motion, Bretuil doubted its success, and hesitated to advance the sixty thousand rubles, which Catherine demanded of the king his master. But fearing to wound the empress by a formal refusal, and distrustful of her secretary, whom he regarded as an adventurer, he studied for evasion, and desired her majesty might be assured, that the king of France would esteem the opportunity of affording her a proof of his attachment a pleasure, and that her request should be communicated to him without delay. With this message he sent the form of a note, which he drew up to be copied by Catherine. Odart, believing that the empress would not scruple the form proposed by the embassador, promised this to M. de Bretuil, in her name. Catherine, offended at the distrust implied by such a measure, and the delay it would necessarily occasion, vouchsafed no reply. The embassador, having waited

* The French minister.

some days in vain, set out from Russia and proceeded to Vienna, where he received from Versailles the first news of the success of the conspirators, and an order to return to Petersburg. The instant of his departure, a note had been privately delivered to Berenger, the *chargé d'affaires*, couched in the following terms:

'The intended purchase will be speedily made, but at a cheaper rate; we have therefore no need of other supplies.'

The situation of Catharine was at this moment terrible. The dread of treachery or accident by which her designs might be betrayed, the apprehension of an arrest, of dethronement, of seclusion for life, by turns harassed her with the most restless inquietude. Peter, sporting on the brink of a precipice, was intent only on his pleasures; yet he was not unmindful of the unhappy Ivan, who, by his orders, had been secretly brought to Petersburg and lodged in an obscure house, where, during the night, he received visits from the czar, accompanied by two of his confidants.

The fleet destined to act against Denmark being completely equipped, one division remained at Cronstadt, while the other waited at Revel. The regiments by which this expedition was to be followed were already in Pomerania, where

others were on the march to join them: every thing was prepared for the invasion of Holstein. Peter was delighted with the idea of a conquest by which he would be enabled to pay his respects to his friend and model, the Prussian monarch, whose envoy he treated with the most extravagant adulation. The day for his departure was fixed by the czar on that following the festival of Paul and Peter, which it was the custom to celebrate at Peterhoff, and at the end of which it was planned that the empress should be arrested. Two days before the czar was hurled from the throne, it is said that he held in his debauch the following discourse: 'Of what use are all those petty sovereigns of Europe? What are they? In future, I am resolved, there shall be in this part of the world only three powers, Russia, Prussia, and France. The north shall be mine, the king of Prussia shall have Germany, and the rest shall belong to France?' 'But why,' observed a courtier, 'is France put by your majesty into the division?'—'Oh! yes,' replied the czar, 'France also is a great nation.'

The friends of Catherine, informed of all that passed in the court, were vigilant to defeat its purposes: while Peter remained ignorant of their designs, they watched for the moment of action,

a moment which chance accelerated. Waiting in indolent security the feast at Peterhoff, the emperor had repaired to Oranienbaum, his country palace, to pass a few days, accompanied by some of the most beautiful women of the court. Scandalous and absurd reports were propagated on this occasion, which served to increase the partisans of Catherine, and to excite against her husband new disgusts. It had been first determined by the conspirators to seize the czar on his return to Petersburg, but, in a new deliberation, it was agreed that delay might occasion danger, and that their plan might be executed with an equal prospect of success on the arrival of the emperor at Peterhoff.

This project, so well concerted, in which each of the parties concerned relied no less on the fidelity of his adherents than on his own courage and firmness, was suddenly and unexpectedly revealed. A discovery, not effected by chance, but by a caprice of fortune, emboldened rather than discouraged the conspirators, and, by precipitating their movements, secured their success. By an excess of precaution, a person had been commissioned by madame Dashkoff and Odart to watch the steps of the chiefs of the revolt, that, on the detection of treachery, instant measures of vengeance and

security might be adopted. Passick, a lieutenant, had gained the soldiers of a company of guards to which he belonged: one of these men, upon a supposition of the concurrence of his captain, simply demanded of him on what day they were to take up arms against the czar? The captain surprised, yet dissembling, answered the soldier in vague terms, by which he drew from him the secret, a disclosure which he instantly reported to the chancery of the regiment. Passick, at nine in the evening, the hour of the discovery, being put under an arrest, wrote with his pencil on a scrap of paper, in a room where he was previously thrust, the following sentence: 'Proceed this instant to execution, or we are undone.' The spy, who watched his motions, presented himself at the door. Passick, to whom he was unknown, perceiving every thing must be hazarded, gave him the billet, with a charge to convey it speedily to the hetman Razumoffsky, by whom he would be well recompensed. The man hastened to princess Dashkoff, and put into her hand the paper. Panin, by accident, entered at the same moment. The princess was instantly determined by the advice of the soldier, observing that, however weak might be the czar, they had no other means of safety: should time be al-

lowed him for defence, their ruin was inevitable. Panin, whether deficient in courage and activity, or doubtful of the success of the enterprise, opposed this reasoning, and, after declaring his resolution to take till the next day to deliberate on the measures proper to be pursued, withdrew.

The agents of the princess had, in the mean time, apprised the conspirators of what had happened. On the departure of Panin, the youthful heroine, dressed in man's apparel, issued out to join on the green bridge Orloff and his friends, whom she had been in the habit of meeting thus disguised. These she found no less uneasy than herself, and equally eager for the execution of the plot: a delay till the morrow appeared to them all pregnant with the most fatal consequences. The period fixed on for action was in the silence of the night, before the czar had been allowed time for prevention, or the people to arm in his defence. Orloff, his brother, and a friend, hastened to the barracks to prepare the soldiers for the signal, while his second brother accepted the perilous commission of seeking the empress at Peterhoff.

Catherine, under pretence of leaving the apartments free for the approaching feast, had retired to a summer-house remote from the preparations,

at the foot of which runs a canal communicating with the Neva. Here she had caused to be fastened, as without design, a small boat, that occasionally facilitated the visits of her favourites, and which in an extremity might aid her escape. Orloff, having entrusted to his brother a key of this summer-house, instructed him in the methods of rendering it useful; while the princess Dashkoff charged him with a note to engage the empress to join them with speed.

It was two in the morning, when Catherine, ignorant of what was passing, and lulled in a profound sleep, found herself suddenly roused by a soldier to whose person she was a stranger, and who stood by the side of her bed: 'Your majesty,' said he, 'neglecting in his haste to deliver the note, 'has not a moment to lose; arise, get ready and follow me.' Having thus spoken, he instantly disappeared. The empress, astonished and terrified, called her favourite woman; having dressed in haste, they disguised themselves so as to be unknown to the sentinels. Scarcely were they prepared when the soldier returned, from whom they learned that a carriage awaited them at the garden gate. They found there a coach which, by the princess Dashkoff, had been kept in readiness, under pretence of a rural excursion, at the house

of one of her peasants a few miles from Peterkoff, and for which Alexey, the brother of Orloff, had sent a comrade.

Catherine, with her attendant, having entered the carriage, the reins were seized by Alexey, who set off at full speed. One of the horses, being over driven, suddenly stopped and fell. They were compelled to alight, while Alexey, with his companion, employed every effort to cheer the animal, but in vain. The distance from Petersburg was still considerable; the danger and confusion in the midst of the darkness became every moment more frightful. In this dilemma, they determined to proceed on foot, but had not walked far when they fortunately espied a light country cart. The brother of Orloff seized on the horses, the empress mounted, and they set off as before. Another carriage was presently heard, rattling after them with unusual rapidity; in it was Orloff, who, calculating the moments, was alarmed at the delay of the empress: he no sooner perceived them than, crying out that they waited only for her, he drove on, without staying for a reply, to receive her at Petersburg. Catherine, nearly exhausted by anxiety and fatigue, yet commanding herself enough to

assume a sedate and tranquil air, reached the city at seven in the morning (July 9, 1762).

She proceeded immediately to the quarter of the Ismaïloff guards, of which three companies had been won over to her party: but they were not permitted, by the chiefs of the conspiracy, to leave the barracks till the appearance of the empress, lest precipitation should ruin their plan. At the report of her arrival, thirty of the soldiers, half-dressed, ran out to receive her with shouts of joy. Alarmed at the smallness of the number, she hesitated for a moment, and at length assured them, in a tremulous voice, "That she had been driven by her danger to the necessity of asking their assistance; that her death, together with that of her son, had been decreed by the czar that very night; that flight had been her only means of escape; and that her confidence in their attachment had led her to put herself into their hands!" Her auditors trembled with indignation, and swore to die in her defence.

Their example, with that of the hetman their colonel, who presently joined them, collected others, who, led by curiosity, flocked about the empress in great numbers, and with one consent declared her sovereign. The chaplain of the regi-

ment being immediately summoned, a crucifix was fetched from the altar, on which the oath of the troops was received. Amidst the tumult some voices were heard proclaiming Catharine regent, but these were overborne by the threats of Orloff, and the more numerous cries of 'Long live the empress!'

The Simeonofsky and the Preobaginsky had already imitated the Ismaïloff guards: the officers placed themselves with docility at the head of their companies, as if pre-engaged in the plot. Two only had the courage to ſtand out, and these were instantly arrested. Among those who had been gained over, major Ischapeloff and lieutenant Poushtein were only wanting, to whom the empress sent an order of arrest, coldly observing she had no farther use for them. While princess Dashkoff, the hetman, and other nobles and officers remained about Catharine, and completely secured the regiments of guards, Orloff ran to that of the artillery, to draw it to the aid of the empress: but, though treasurer of the corps, and beloved by the soldiers, they unanimously refused to follow him, insisting on seeing the orders of their general Villebois. The general had been for some time favourably regarded by Catharine, but, having observed in him a probity too austere to allow her a hope

of his engaging in the revolt, she had not ventured to confide to him her plans. When a friend of Orloff appeared, with a command from her majesty to the general to join her at the barracks, at the head of his regiment, he asked, with surprise, if the emperor was dead? The messenger, without answering the question, repeated his order, when Villebois, confounded, repaired alone to the barracks. On finding Catharine surrounded by a crowd of people, he perceived at once what was required of him; but, withheld by his fidelity to the czar, or distrustful of the success of the empress, he ventured to hint to her the obstacles she had yet to surmount, and which he declared she ought to have foreseen. 'I sent not for you,' said she, haughtily interrupting him, 'to enquire what I ought to have foreseen, but to demand how you intend to act?'—'To obey your majesty,' replied Villebois in confusion, and departed to put himself at the head of his regiment, and to deliver the arsenals to the adherents of Catherine.

All these advantages were attained within two hours. The empress already beheld herself surrounded by two thousand warriors, and a large proportion of the inhabitants of Petersburg, who mechanically followed the soldiers. By the ad-

vice of the hetman, she repaired to the church of Kasan, where every thing had been prepared for her reception. As she passed along, attended by a numerous suite, the windows and doors were crowded with spectators, who mingled their acclamations with the shouts of the troops. The archbishop of Novogorod, arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, accompanied by a train of priests, to whom long beards and hoary heads gave a venerable appearance, waited at the altar to receive her, placed on her head the imperial crown, and, in a loud voice, proclaimed her, under the name of Catherine II. sovereign of all the Russias; declaring at the same time the young grand-duke, Paul Petrovitch, to be her successor. A *Te Deum* was then chanted, accompanied by the shouts of the multitude.

The empress, after the ceremony, proceeded to the palace, so lately occupied by Elizabeth. The gates were thrown open to the people, who, during several hours, flocked thither, and, falling on their knees before Catherine, took the oath of allegiance.

The conspirators, in the mean time, were unwearied in their visits to the several quarters of the town, which they put in a state of defence: every-where a guard was stationed, and cannons

placed with lighted matches, without any opposition or interruption. Prince George of Holstein, uncle to the emperor, having ventured out with a few faithful adherents, was surrounded and compelled to surrender, loaded with insults, and dragged to prison, whence, after some hours, he was delivered by the empress, who had him kept under an arrest in his own house.

While the partisans of Catherine triumphed without resistance, the czar remained ignorant of all that was passing, of which none of his friends had thought of informing him. One man only, Brestan, a foreigner, who owed to Peter his fortune, had the courage to prove his grateful fidelity: he gave to a domestic, whom he disguised as a countryman, a written paper, with orders to deliver it into the hands of the czar. The messenger chanced to pass just as the conspirators were placing a guard on the Kalinka bridge, over the Fontanka, which, in going out on that side of the city, it is necessary to cross. Having escaped their notice, he proceeded rapidly to Oranienbaum, which, on his arrival, he found the emperor had quitted; upon this intelligence he hastened on in quest of him to Peterhoff.

Every circumstance seemed to concur in favour of the revolution. On the road to Peterhoff, at

some distance from Petersburg, a regiment was encamped of sixteen hundred men, wholly unconnected with the revolt; on the tidings of which, it was feared, they would be ordered by the czar to break up their camp, and join his Holstein troops. Measures were scarcely planned to avert this catastrophe, when the colonel of the regiment, whom confused reports had reached of what was passing in the city, appeared at Petersburg. The conspirators, surrounding him, spoke with enthusiasm of their enterprise, of its beneficial purport and probable success. The colonel, convinced by their arguments, or overpowered by their solicitude, returned to surrender his regiment to the empress. While haranguing his men for this purpose, an order from the czar commanded his presence and the aid of his troops: the soldiers, confounded, cried out unanimously, they no longer acknowledged the authority of Peter; having said which, they began their march to join the revolters.

Before the close of the day, Catherine was in possession of fifteen thousand choice troops: the city was in a state of defence, order prevailed, and no blood had been shed. Her interest had been principally promoted in consequence of a report, spread by her adherents on every side, that

she had, together with her son, been destined to death by the czar, on that very day; a rumour received without proof, and believed without investigation. Catherine, when arrived at the palace, sent instantly for the young grand-duke; a detachment, headed by a trusty officer, was dispatched for the purpose. The prince, who had been frequently told of the designs of the czar against him, was, on awaking in the midst of the soldiers, seized with terror. He was carried in the arms of Panin to his mother, who, leading him into the balcony, held him up to the people, whose acclamations were redoubled at the sight.

A rumour was on a sudden spread through the multitude that Peter III. was no more, and that the procession with his body was then passing. To the shouts of the people succeeded on this report the most profound silence. Several soldiers, covered with long black clokes and bearing torches in their hands, now appeared on each side a coffin, over which hung a pall, preceded by priests, chanting litanies as the procession moved forward, while the crowd fell back respectfully on either side. It was not doubted afterwards, that this mock tragedy was a stratagem of the conspirators for deceiving the people, and appalling the friends of the czar.

The principal nobles, the greater part of whom had no share in the conspiracy, on learning its success at their rising in the morning, resorted to the palace, where, compelled by interest to disguise their feelings, they did homage to the empress.

A council was next held by the heads of her faction, who, to profit by the dispositions of the army, resolved to march immediately against the czar. To secure in the mean time Catherine from danger, and calm the fears of the soldiers on her account, they conducted her to an old palace, built with timber, facing a large open plain, which they surrounded with troops. Towards noon the empress, assured of Petersburg, caused a manifesto, which had been secretly printed, to be distributed through the city. A notification was next delivered to the foreign ministers, appointing the day of their admittance to court, to present their compliments of congratulation to the empress.

During these transactions, Catherine, decorated with the insignia of the order of St. Andrew, habited in the uniform of the guards (borrowed for the occasion of Taliezin, a young officer), and mounted on horseback, rode through the ranks, accompanied by the princess Dashkoff, similarly apparelled. It was at this instant that Potemkin,

a youth only sixteen years of age, and ensign in the regiment of horse-guards, perceiving the hat of the empress without a plume, rode up and with great gallantry offered to her his own. His horse, accustomed to form into a squadron, could not for some time be made to quit the side of that on which Catherine was mounted, who observed with admiration the grace and courage with which the restive animal was managed by his rider.

The troops, supplied with beer and brandy, expressed their satisfaction in the presence of their sovereign, by reiterated shouts and other marks of vociferous joy. In this tumult a regiment of cavalry, in which the czar, while yet grand-duke, had served as a colonel, and which on his accession to the throne he had incorporated with the guards, was observed to take no part. The officers having refused to Catherine the oath of allegiance, had been put under arrest, and replaced by those of another regiment: the sullen silence of these honest and grateful soldiers, contrasted the noisy intemperance of their venal fellows. Nothing being apprehended from so small a party, the troops began their march against the czar. The empress, near an open window, dined in view of the soldiers and the people, whom curiosity had brought before the palace.

Peter remained yet unsuspicious of all that was passing: lulled into a fatal security, he had in the morning ordered the arrest of an officer, who, faithful to his interest, had the preceding evening hastened to inform him of what was on foot. He had, with his mistress, his favourites, and the women of the court, set out from Oranienbaum, in a calash, for Peterhoff, to be present on the festival of the ensuing day. The carriage of the czar, attended by others, proceeded rapidly, while the company within amused themselves with the idea of their expected pleasure. In the midst of this thoughtless mirth, Gudovitch, the general aide-de-camp, who had galloped forward, was perceived returning at full speed. He had been met on the road by a chamberlain of the empress, coming on foot to his master, to inform him of her escape, and the perplexity which had in consequence filled the palace of Peterhoff. Gudovitch, who had turned back at this intelligence, as he approached the carriage of the czar, called to the driver to stop. Peter surprised, and somewhat angry, enquired if he was mad? The aide-de-camp, coming close to the calash, whispered some words in his ear. The czar changed colour, appeared agitated, alighted from the carriage, and drew Gudovitch aside, to interrogate him

with more freedom. Having thus done, he returned, handed the ladies from the calash, and pointing out to them a gate of the park through which they might join him at the front of the palace, resumed his seat with some of his courtiers, and drove off with speed.

On his arrival at Peterhoff, he ran to the pavilion which Catherine had occupied, and in his confusion sought minutely for her. Every person was distracted by his questions, but from none could he gain satisfaction. The sagacious foresaw already the extent of this misfortune, but, not daring to increase the alarm, continued silent. His mistress, with the ladies, proceeded through the garden walk, ignorant of the motive which had induced the czar to leave them on the road. 'Now,' cried he aloud, on perceiving the countess—'now, Romanovna, will you believe me? Catherine has escaped! I told you there was nothing of which she was not capable.'

Some boors, returned from Petersburg, were in the mean while relating to a group of valets what they had witnessed in the city: the domestics whispered among themselves respecting this intelligence, which they ventured not to disclose either to their master to his courtiers. A gloomy distrust prevailed around; it seemed as

if every heart presaged the fate that impended. The czar, confounded and dismayed, forbore to make farther enquiry respecting events of which no one dared to give him information.

In the midst of this dreadful stillness, a countryman made his way through the affrighted group, and having bowed his body, in the accustomed form of salutation, drew from his bosom, without uttering a word, a sealed note, which he presented to Peter. This man was the domestic dispatched by Bressan. The czar ran his eye hastily over the paper, and then read its contents aloud, by which those standing round him were informed, that an insurrection had broken out in the morning at Petersburg, that the troops had taken arms in favour of Catherine, that she was about to be crowned in the church of Kasan, and that the people took part with the soldiers.

These tidings appeared to affect the czar with considerable depression; his courtiers vainly endeavoured to cheer his spirits, and to communicate to him a courage of which they were not themselves possessed. Vorontzoff, the chancellor, observed, that it was probable, however Catherine might try to fan the flame, this fermentation might prove but of slight consequence; that, with permission from the czar, he would hasten

to Petersburg, and engage to bring back with him the empress. Peter, without hesitation, accepted this rash proposal, and the chancellor departed to execute his engagement.

On entering the palace, Vorontzoff found Catherine surrounded by a multitude, in the act of doing homage; he had nevertheless the temerity to represent to her the danger to which he believed she exposed herself: 'You may,' said he, 'madam, have some success, but it will be of short duration. Is it acting wisely to trust to the blind zeal of imprudent friends, for the sake of sharing with them a momentary triumph? Is it prudent to make of your husband a mortal enemy? Why take up arms, when, by your superior mind, and the gentleness of persuasion, you can with ease obtain all that you desire? The regiments of the guards compose not the whole army, and of the Russian empire the inhabitants of Petersburg are but an inconsiderable part.' To this harangue, Catherine calmly replied;—'You see how it is; I do nothing; I yield but to the ardent sensibility of the empire.' Vorontzoff, who perceived the crowd every instant increasing, and who, in the looks of those around him, read the consequences with which his perseverance might be attended, forgot with his duty his boast to his

master, and, yielding to the torrent, in his turn took the oaths of allegiance: 'I will serve you in the council, madam,' added he, 'but I am useless in the field. My presence may be offensive to those who heard me address you: that I may avoid exciting jealousy, I intreat to be allowed to remain in my house, under the guard of a trusty officer.' This request was immediately granted. The chancellor, by a precaution so prudent, was secured alike from the partisans of Catherine, and the suspicions of the czar.

At six in the evening, the empress mounted her horse a second time: with a drawn sword in her hand, and her temples bound with oak leaves, she hastened to place herself at the head of her troops, already on their march. On either side of her, rode princess Dashkoff and the hetman Razumoffsky; a crowd of courtiers followed in her train, who vied with each other in the ardor with which they shared her danger and partook in her triumph. Her army was augmented by three thousand Kosacs, well mounted, who being, by the orders of the czar, about to file off towards Pomerania, had been stopped on their way by a messenger from the hetman, and brought back to join the conspirators.

While these events were passing in the city,

Peter, after the departure of Vorontzoff, had remained a prey to the most cruel suspense and inquietude. In expectation every moment of receiving news, it became no longer possible to doubt of what had happened. Surrounded by weeping women, and young courtiers, equally incapable of affording aid, he traversed the garden with restless strides: twenty different plans were, in the same hour, formed and abandoned; in dictating useless manifestoes, in imprecating vengeance against Catherine, he alternately occupied and wasted the time. Dinner was at length announced, which he commanded to be served up on the margin of the sea; and here, for a moment, the cruel reflections by which he was harassed appeared to suffer a respite. But this interval was of no long duration: his appalled imagination again presented the evils which menaced him; an order was dispatched to the three thousand Holsteiners, left at Oranienbaum, to hasten, with the artillery, to the aid of their master.

It was at this instant, that the venerable marshal Munich made his appearance. The great military reputation of this officer rendered him the only person capable, in the present juncture of affairs, of re-animating the drooping spirits of

the czar:—'Your majesty's troops are coming,' said the veteran commander; 'let us put ourselves at their head, and march straight to Petersburg. You have yet there many friends; on your appearance, they will arm in your defence. The guards have been misled into a momentary alienation, and will soon rally around your standard. Be assured, should we be forced to action, the palm of victory will not long be disputed with you by the rebels.'

The resolution of the marshal was more flattering to the czar, than acceptable to the timid train by which he was surrounded: they were preparing to commence their march, when news was brought of the approach of the empress, whose army, it was affirmed, consisted of twenty thousand men. The women cried out to return to Oranienbaum; while Peter hesitated whether to expose his person. 'If you wish,' said Munich, 'to decline the battle, remain not here to be attacked, where you have no means of defence. Neither Peterhoff nor Oranienbaum can stand a siege; but a retreat is offered you by Cronstadt. Cronstadt is yet under your command; you have there a fleet and a numerous garrison. It is from Cronstadt that you will find but

little difficulty in restoring Petersburg to its duty.'

This advice being unanimously approved, general Devier was dispatched, in a boat, to take upon himself the command of Cronstadt. Two yachts were scarcely prepared for the accommodation of the czar, when an officer came to assure him of the fidelity of the place. Peter, who, in idea, already beheld Catherine at the gates of Peterhoff, precipitately embarked, followed by the brave Munich and the timid court. A fatality seemed suspended over the head of the unfortunate czar: a few hours had completely changed the face of affairs; the fleet and garrison of Cronstadt, by which Devier had been received with shouts of joy, and oaths of fealty to his master, had already broke out in revolt; Devier was deposed and imprisoned; and this shifting scene had been effected by a stratagem.

In the commencement of the insurrection, and amidst the measures primarily adopted for its success, no one had thought of Cronstadt. It was past noon ere the importance of the place occurred to recollection; some person at length remarked on the error of this neglect. No time was to be lost: Admiral Taliezin offered himself for the

enterprise. Having embarked in a long-boat, and expressly forbidden the rowers to mention whence they came, he arrived at Cronstadt. General Devier, expecting the emperor, kept watch: perceiving the boat of Taliezin, he ran forward to meet him, with the view of discovering whether he was of the party of Catherine. Taliezin, not less artful, affected ignorance of what had happened, pretending that, having heard at his country-house confused rumours of disturbances at Petersburg, he was hastening to the fleet, whither his duty called him. Devier, believing his story, suffered him to pass. The admiral, instantly repairing to the quarter of the seamen, harangued them on what had passed, on the success of the empress and the justice of her cause: brandy and money, more efficacious than words, having completed their conversion, they engaged, without difficulty, to arrest the commandant. Some soldiers joined their forces to those of the seamen: Devier was hurled into prison, and Taliezin, in the name of the empress, made master of a place, by which the salvation of the czar could only have been effected.

At the moment of this transaction, Peter presented himself at the mouth of the harbour; but dispositions were already made to prevent his

coming on shore. The coast was lined by a part of the garrison under arms; cannons were levelled and matches lighted. As the foremost yacht cast anchor, the sentinel cried out—'Who comes there?' 'The emperor,' was the reply from the vessel.—'There is no emperor,' retorted the sentinel. Peter, starting forward, threw back his cloke, displaying the badge of his order—'Do you not know me?' exclaimed he. 'No!' shouted a thousand voices, 'we know of no emperor:—Long live the empress Catherine!' The admiral then threatened to sink the yacht, if it did not instantly put off. The czar was retiring in consternation, when Gudovitch *, taking him by the arm, laid hold on one of the timbers at the entrance of the mole, 'Place your hand by the side of mine,' said he, intrepidly, 'let us leap on shore. None will dare to fire on you, and Cronstadt shall still be yours.' Munich seconded this advice, but in vain: Peter, in his dismay, would hear of nothing but flight, and ran to hide himself with the women in the cabin. Without allowing themselves time to raise the anchor, the cable was cut, and the boat rowed off.

The rowers, when they had gained a distance

* Peter's aide-de-camp.

from the port, rested on their oars. It was a fine night, and Munich and Gudovitch, sitting on the deck, contemplated the starry heavens and the calm surface of the waters in silent sorrow. The steersman entered the cabin to enquire of the unhappy monarch, whither he would be pleased to direct the vessel? Peter, ordering Munich to be called, thus addressed him: 'I perceive that I was too late in following your advice; but you see the extremity to which I am reduced. You, who have escaped so many dangers inform me, I beseech you, how I am to act?' —'Proceed immediately,' replied Munich, 'to join the squadron at Revel; thence take shipping to Pomerania; put yourself at the head of your army; return to Russia; and I will engage that, in six weeks, Petersburg and the empire will submit themselves to you.' This bold and manly advice was overruled by the women and courtiers, as if combined to ruin their pusillanimous master. With one accord they cried out, that the rowers could not hold out to Revel. 'Well, then,' said the brave marshal, 'we will all row with them.' The timid or treacherous court still shrunk, and joined to assure the czar, that he had magnified the danger; that

Catherine was only desirous of coming to an accommodation; that to negociate would be safer than to resist. Peter, yielding to remonstrances that flattered his imbecility, ordered the pilot to steer for Oranienbaum.

It was four in the morning when they reached the palace, from which some of the domestics came in alarm to receive them. Commanding them not to divulge the news of his return, Peter shut himself in his chamber, prohibiting any interruption, where he employed himself in writing secretly to the empress. At ten o'clock he came forth with an aspect more composed: those of his Holstein guards who had returned to Oranienbaum, hastened to surround him, shedding tears of joy and affection; embracing his knees and kissing his hands, they entreated him to march them against the troops of the empress, swearing they were ready, to a man, to sacrifice their lives in his defence. Munich, seizing the occasion, once more tried his influence, and exhorted Peter to make a courageous stand. 'Come,' cried he, 'march against the rebels: I will go before you; their swords shall reach you but through my body.' The cowardice of Peter had doomed him to death; the gallantry of the veteran marshal,

and the noble devotedness of the soldiers, proved alike ineffectual to save him from his fate.

During these transactions, Catherine, at the head of her army, had halted at a small public-house by the road side, eight versts from Petersburg; under this humble shelter she reposed for some hours on the clokes of the officers. Gregory Orloff, at break of day, with a few volunteers, had reconnoitred the environs of Peterhoff: finding there only some peasants, armed with scythes, who had collected the preceding evening, he dispersed them by blows with the flat of his sabre, compelling them to join in the cry of 'Long live the empress.'

Catherine, mounted on horseback, at five in the morning, rode to the monastery of St. Sergius, near Streina, where she again halted. It was here that she received the letter from her husband, in which, after acknowledging his misconduct, he offered to share with her the sovereign power. To this letter, having detained the messenger, she returned no answer, and soon after pursued her march.

Peter, informed of her hostile approach, ordered a horse to be prepared, in the design of escaping, alone and disguised, towards the frontiers of Poland. But, uniformly weak and irresolute, he

presently after gave orders for dismantling the little fortress at Oranienbaum, as a mark of submission to the victorious empress, whose mercy and pardon he implored, in a second letter, full of humiliation and abasement. He assured her, that he would resign, undisputed, the imperial crown; that he asked only a pension, and liberty to retire to Holstein. To this address no answer was vouchsafed; the compassion of Catherine, it is not improbable, was stifled by contempt for the pusillanimity of her husband. The chamberlain, Ismaïloff, the bearer of the letter, after some conversation with the empress, was induced without difficulty to betray his master, to whom he was sent back to prepare him for unconditional submission.

Ismaïloff, attended by a single servant, returned to Oranienbaum. The czar was accompanied by his Holstein guard, consisting of six hundred men: these were ordered to keep at a distance. The chamberlain, with whom he shut himself up, exhorted him to abandon his troops, and to repair to the empress, by whom, he assured him, he would be well received. Peter hesitated. Ismaïloff, magnifying the danger of delay, urged his decision. The traitor prevailed: Peter suffered himself to be handed into a carriage, with Vorontzoff,

his mistress, and Gudovitch his aide-de-camp. They took the road to Peterhoff.

The czar vainly expected to move, by submission, the heart of a woman whose pity he had forfeited with her respect. As the carriage passed through the army, the Kosacs, by whom it was first met, preserved a mournful silence: Peter experienced a poignant emotion; the reiterated cry of 'Long live Catherine!' completely sunk his desponding spirits. On stepping from the carriage, his mistress was borne off by the soldiers, and the ribband torn from her, with which her sister, madame Dashkoff, was instantly decorated. Gudovitch bore the insults offered to him with a dignified composure, reproaching the rebels with their insolence and treason.

The unhappy Peter, led up the grand staircase, was stripped by the attendants of the insignia of his order; his clothes were afterwards taken from him, in the pockets of which were found several diamonds and ornaments of jewelry. Decency and humanity were violated by his adversaries; no respect was paid to his person, no sympathy given to his misfortunes; stripped to the shirt and barefoot, he remained exposed to the brutal jests of an insolent soldiery: an old morning gown being, at length, thrown over him,

he was shut up alone, in a room of the palace, and a guard placed without the door.

Count Panin was, by a commission from the empress, admitted to a conference with the fallen monarch. Her majesty, he told him, designed not to keep him in confinement, but, according to his request, would send him into Holstein. To this assurance, others were added calculated to ensnare the credulous prince, who was seduced to write and sign the following declaration, too curious to be omitted.

"During the short space of my absolute reign over the empire of Russia, I became sensible of my incapacity to sustain so heavy a burthen, and of the disproportion of my abilities to the task of governing a great empire, either as its sovereign, or in any other capacity. I foresaw also the troubles that must thence have arisen; troubles that would have been followed by the ruin of the empire, and my own eternal disgrace. Having seriously reflected on these things, I declare, without constraint, and in the most solemn manner, to the Russian empire, and to the whole universe, that I renounce for ever the government of the said empire, in which I desire not hereafter ever to reign, either as an absolute sovereign, or under any other form or title whatsoever: that I have

no wish to aspire thereto, or to employ any means, of any kind, for such a purpose. As a pledge of which, I swear sincerely before God and all the world, to this present renunciation; written and signed this 29th of June, O. S. 1762."

A life thus purchased with ignominy, is too dearly bought; he who is content to survive with dishonour, can scarcely be envied the paltry gift. In vain did this miserable prince become the assassin of his own reputation; his merciless enemies were not yet content: Panin, having gained his purpose, left his victim, whom the hope of life seemed to have calmed. In the evening, an officer, with a strong escort, conveyed him a prisoner to Ropscha, a small palace twenty versts from Peterhoff. Peter had enjoyed a power, so imprudently used and so weakly yielded, only six months. A revolution, thus important, was effected without bloodshed in one day: Catherine, a foreigner, with no hereditary title, became, in that short space, from the brink of destruction, possessed of absolute authority, and sovereign mistress of an immense empire.

Numerous manifestoes immediately appeared, severely condemning the conduct of the czar; reflecting but too justly on the weakness of his

personal character; and attributing to him, with less truth, the most criminal designs. The affection of the empress towards the Russian people was, at the same time, strongly declared; her regard to their interests, and her attachment to their church: religion was on this, as on similar occasions, profaned for the purposes of interest and ambition.

Petersburg, since the preceding day, had remained in a state of uncertainty and suspense; no one had informed its inhabitants of Catherine's success. Peter had yet in the city some friends; had he attacked and repulsed the rebels, the citizens would have received him eagerly, to atone for their dereliction. The foreign merchants, dreading the event, had hastily removed on board their vessels their most valuable effects, holding themselves in readiness to embark. Towards evening was heard a distant firing of cannon: a sudden alarm spread through the capital; till the regularity of the report convinced them that the sound announced triumph rather than hostility: hope succeeded to fear, and tranquillity to inquietude.

Catherine passed the night at Peterhoff, no longer a captive, but a sovereign princess: the following day she received at her levee the prin-

cipal nobility, with the courtiers and women who hastened from Oranienbaum. The princess Daschkoff, beholding among those who prostrated themselves before the empress, her father, her brother, and other relatives, exclaimed—'Pardon my family, madam, to you I sacrificed it.' Catherine, giving them her hand to kiss, commanded them to rise. Marshal Munich advanced from amidst the crowd, dignified in character and venerable in age: 'Was it you, feldt-marshal,' said Catherine, on perceiving him, 'who wanted to fight against me?' 'Yes, madam,' replied the veteran, in a firm and manly tone, 'could I do less for the prince who delivered me from captivity? But, henceforward, it becomes my duty to fight for you; to whom, with equal fidelity, I devote my services.'

Towards evening, the empress returned triumphant to Petersburg, which she entered on horseback, preceded or followed by the chiefs of the conspiracy. Wreaths of oak leaf crowned the army, with whose shouts and acclamations those of the populace mingled. The people formed into lines, through which the empress passed, condescendingly giving them her hand to kiss. A number of priests had assembled around the avenues of the palace; Catherine, according

to the custom of the country, stooped to salute the cheeks of the principal clergy, as a testimony of high respect. For some days after her return, she continued to court popularity by shewing herself to the public. At the senate she attended to various causes, which were tried before her. She held her court with a graceful dignity, that effaced the remembrance of the past scenes; while, by the most winning address, she conciliated the favour of the foreign ministers, to whom congratulatory audiences were given.

Among her first cares was the sending back to Schlusselburg the unfortunate Ivan, from the house in which he had been concealed: the next, to reward magnificently those to whom she was indebted for the throne. Panin was ordained first minister; on the Orloffs was bestowed the title of count, among whom, Gregory, the favourite brother, was appointed lieutenant-general of the Russian armies, and chevalier of St. Alexander Nefsky, the second order in the empire. The inferior instruments were recompensed in proportion, while the soldiers and populace were supplied with beer and brandy. In conciliating the favour of these, Catherine sometimes subjected herself to inconvenience and restraint, of which the following incident may afford an example.

Three days after the revolution, a soldier, in his intoxication, having dreamed that the empress was carried off by the Prussians and Holsteiners, started up, and running wildly among the barracks, propagated the alarm. The regiments, seizing their arms, ran to the palace, and loudly insisted on seeing the empress. Razumoffsky, the hetman, roused by the tumult, appeared at a window, assuring the troops of the safety of her majesty, who was then, he added, reposing in security after her fatigues. Vain were these assurances, the clamour redoubled, nor could be appeased. The hetman, hastening to the chamber of Catherine, and causing her to be awakened, entreated her not to be alarmed: 'You know I fear nothing,' answered she boldly; 'but what is the matter?' 'The soldiers imagine you are not here, and insist upon seeing you.' 'Well, then, they must be satisfied,' replied she, hastening to rise. Having dressed, she called for her carriage, in which she was driven to the Kasanskoi church. 'Is it indeed the empress? Is it indeed our mother?' interrogated the soldiers, by whom the carriage was surrounded. On arriving at the church, Catherine shewed herself, harangued the people, thanked them for their solicitude, and dismissed them highly gratified.

Towards the officers and friends of the emperor, she made a point of shewing clemency; no one was deprived of his property or life: Gudovitch, the aide-de-camp, with two others, only were imprisoned. The mistress of the czar, who had at first been treated roughly by the soldiers, was sent to the house of her father, further insults forbidden, and afterwards exiled for a time to a village beyond Moscow.

The courtiers, eagerly contending for the favour of their new sovereign, pressed around her: that her heart had already made its election, was suspected by no one. The distinctions showered upon Orloff, appeared but as the reward of his services: his secret was first discovered by madame Dashkoff, who, having imprudently reproached Catherine with a choice that degraded her, spread the rumour among her friends, and prepared the way for her own disgrace. The chiefs of the revolt learned, with displeasure, the favour of a man regarded by them as their instrument; while the courtiers perceived, in the intrigues of Orloff, a man more artful and expert than themselves.

The most zealous of the adherents of the empress were not yet free from inquietudes: several of the regiments murmured; remorse seized them for their disloyalty towards the czar, whom

they could not but regard as their rightful sovereign: the populace, with that levity by which they are, in all nations, characterised, and which ever hurries them to opposite extremes, passed from rage to pity, commiserating the fate of a prince they had been so recently eager to dethrone. In the misfortunes of Peter they lost sight of his infirmities, and reproached each other with having betrayed and sold their master. The city, after its tumult, appeared to awake as from intoxication, to regard the past scenes as a delirium, and to call in question the rectitude of the motive by which they had been effected. A sentiment of regret and remorse, pervading every rank, spread through the troops, who, from mutual recrimination, proceeded to blows; in these disputes, the blood which the revolution had spared began to flow.

To allay this spirit, and appease these commotions, the officers vainly interposed: rash to perpetrate what their fury had prompted, and repentant at the view of the mischiefs it had occasioned, reason, in the reflux of the passions, was impotent to control the tide of popular rage. A resolute leader was only wanting, to reverse the measures of the three preceding days, and, with

the same precipitation which had hurled him from the throne, to replace the czar in the seat of his ancestors.

During this agitation of the public mind, intelligence from Moscow increased the panic: the accession of Catherine having been proclaimed in the capital, the soldiers heard it in sullen silence, and refused to join in the acclamations of their officers. The situation of the empress, not more critical than dangerous, robbed her of repose; unable to rest in her bed, or in her palace, the tumults of ambition, and the spectres of fear, alternately harassed and tortured her mind.

During this fluctuation of public feeling, Peter passed his hours in lonely captivity, blind to the fate which impended over him. On his removal from Peterhoff, previous, as he supposed, to his exile from Russia, he requested of Catherine, as an amusement in his confinement, to be allowed the services of a negro attached to him, and who, by the singularities of his manners, had been accustomed to divert him; he also petitioned for a favourite dog, a violin, a Bible, and a few romances: disgusted at the ingratitude and the wickedness of mankind, he, at the same time, assured her, that he had resolved henceforward to lead

a private and *philosophical* life. His moderate requests were barbarously denied, and his pretences to philosophy treated with derision.

He had been conducted to a little imperial retreat at Ropscha, where, in a retirement known only to the chiefs of the conspiracy, and the soldiers who formed his guard, he had remained six days. On the seventh, Alexius Orloff, with Teploff an officer, came with news of his speedy deliverance, and asked permission to dine with him. Wine glasses and brandy were, according to the custom of the country, brought before the dinner: while the officer amused the czar with conversation, his companion filled the glasses, infusing into that designed for Peter, a poisonous mixture. The czar, having without distrust swallowed the potion, was presently seized with the most cruel pangs: on pretence of relieving his sufferings, his perfidious guests offered him a second glass, which he rejected with reproaches: on his calling aloud for milk, the remorseless assassins again proffered him poison, which they importuned him to swallow. A French valet-de-chambre, attached to his master, now rushed in, into whose arms Peter threw himself. 'It was not enough, then,' said he in a faint tone of voice, 'to prevent me from reigning in Sweden, and to

deprive me of the Russian crown—I must also be put to death!' The valet presuming to intercede for his master, the ruffians forced from the room a witness so dangerous, and continued their outrages to the unfortunate victim. In the midst of the tumult, the younger of the princes of Baratinsky entered, and joined the assassins. Peter had been thrown to the ground by Orloff, who, kneeling on his breast, grasped firmly his throat. The dying monarch, with the strength of desperation, struggled with the monster who held him down, when a napkin, thrown round his neck by the assistant ruffians, put an end, by suffocation, to his resistance and his life *.

Various circumstances combined to produce this catastrophe; the murmurs of the populace, the uncertain fidelity of the troops, the difficulty of disposing of a captive so important, added to the hopes and projects which, during his life, would not fail to agitate his friends and adherents. Of her innocence of this atrocious act, the general conduct and character of the empress seems to afford a presumption; at least it appears probable that, respecting so horrible a service, her

* July 17th; exactly one week after the revolution.

partisans would, from decency, forbear to consult her: on a subject so delicate, and of so difficult decision, to lean to the side of candour is the undoubted part of the historian. The victim of his weakness rather than of his vices, it is impossible not to contemplate the fate of Peter with the sincerest commiseration.

The murderer, mounting his horse, rode full speed to inform the empress that her husband was no more: he arrived at the instant when Catherine was about to make her appearance at court, where, mistress of her emotions, she presented herself, notwithstanding what had happened, with a tranquil air: immediately afterwards, she shut herself up with the chiefs of her adherents, to deliberate on the measures proper to be pursued. In this council it was determined, that the decease of the czar should not be publicly announced till the ensuing day. The empress dined as usual in public, and in the evening held a court. The next day, as she sat at table, the death of Peter was publicly proclaimed, when Catherine rose from her seat, her eyes suffused with tears, and, dismissing the courtiers, shut herself in her apartment, in which she secluded herself for several days.

During this period, a declaration was published,

imputing the death of the czar to the accidental effects of a complaint to which his constitution was subject; exhorting the nation to forgiveness and forgetfulness of what was past; and to consider a catastrophe so sudden and unexpected, as a special effect of the providence of God in favour of the late changes.

The body of the czar was brought to Petersburg, and, for three days, exposed, in an open coffin, dressed in the Holstein uniform, in the church of the monastery of St. Alexander Nefsky, to all ranks and conditions of the people. His face, it is said, had become black; extravasated blood was seen to ooze through the epidermis, penetrating even the gloves which had been put on his hands: some persons who had the courage to place their mouth on that of the emperor, found their lips swell, so inveterate was the poison he had been compelled to swallow. On the supposition that these circumstances had been foreseen by the conspirators, they were considered as less dangerous than any remaining doubts respecting the reality of Peter's decease.

His remains were interred on the 21st instant, the very day fixed by him, previous to the revolution, for the commencement of his expedition against Denmark. The body was deposited in a

grave before the rails of the altar, near that of the deposed regent Anne, mother of the infant Ivan. Neither tomb, nor inscription, distinguished the place of his interment. Peter had never been formally crowned, and had resigned the reins of empire. The court of Sweden only put on mourning.

The populace, who thronged to the funeral of the czar, abused the guards, whom they reproached with having basely shed the last drop of the blood of the great Peter. The Holstein soldiers, who had hitherto remained at Oranienbaum, free, but disarmed, crowded to the obsequies of their master, whose corpse they surrounded weeping: the Russians regarding them no longer as rivals, but as faithful servants, mingled with theirs their tears.

Orders were, on the following day, sent down for the embarkation of the Holsteiners for their own country; the vessel on board which they were put, foundered soon after it had quitted the port; numbers of these unfortunate men were seen clinging about the rocks, above the level of the water, where (while a messenger was dispatched to Petersburg, by admiral Taliezin, to know whether he might be allowed to give aid to the sufferers), they were permitted to perish.

Prince George, constituted by Peter duke of Courland, was obliged to renounce this title, but, as a compensation for his loss, the administration of Holstein, whither he repaired with his family, was committed to him by the empress, whom he afterwards served with fidelity and zeal.

The chancellor Bestucheff, the inverate enemy of Peter, was recalled from exile, and brought to Petersburg. His rank of field-marshal was restored to him by Catherine, also his place in the council, with an annual pension of twenty thousand rubles. Other exiles and prisoners were recalled or liberated, among whom neither Ivan nor his family were included.

The news of the revolution, from which important consequences were expected by foreign powers, quickly spread. The peace and alliance with Prussia had been unpopular measures; the close union between its monarch and Peter, was not calculated to conciliate the favour of his successor, whose advantage appeared to be connected with its rupture: every thing conspired to menace Frederic, and replunge him into the abyss from which he had so recently emerged. Fortunately for Prussia, Catherine felt, in the means by which she had acquired the crown, her power yet unassured: exalted to a perilous height, the basis of

the throne seemed to totter; her own security occupied her attention, which a foreign war might fatally divide. The empire still abounded with malecontents; plausible pretences were not wanting for their attempts: to oppose their enterprises, and combat their designs, it was necessary to concentrate the force of the state. By these considerations the empress was induced to adhere in part to the system of the czar, and to declare to the ministers of Prussia, 'That she was resolved, in all points, to observe inviolably the peace concluded under the preceding reign: nevertheless, she had judged it proper to bring back to Russia, by the nearest road, her troops in Silesia, Prussia, and Pomerania.'

Nor was this moderation entirely produced by the critical situation of affairs: the prudence of the king of Prussia, during his connection with the czar, had appeased and conciliated the mind of the empress. The Russians received orders to separate themselves from their allies, and to return without delay to their country.

The foreign courts, though aware of the steps by which Catherine had usurped the sovereign power, an usurpation which success never fails to sanctify, hesitated not to recognise her title. The hopes which had been conceived by Maria

Theresa, on this revolution, were, on the confirmation of the peace with Prussia, found to be abortive. Lewis XV. whose embassador had been favoured by Catherine, while yet grand-duchess, formed, upon no better foundation, expectations as fruitless. Catherine distinguished the literature of France from the politics of its court: of the former she was a professed admirer, while for the latter she manifested a profound contempt. To d'Alembert, who thought proper to decline the offer, she had proffered a salary of fifty thousand rubles, on condition of his undertaking the education of her son, and finishing at Petersburg the Encyclopædia.

The king of Prussia, who seems to have formed a just opinion of her character, thus expressed himself in a letter on the revolution, written to a favourite: "The emperor of Russia has been dethroned by his consort: it was to be expected. The czarina has much good sense, and the same inclinations as her deceased husband. She possesses no religion, but affects the devotee. It is the second volume of Zeno, the Greek emperor, of his wife Adriana, and of Mary de Medicis. The late chancellor Bestucheff, who had a strong propensity to gold, was her great favourite; the attachments of the present period will, I flatter

myself, be the same. The poor emperor wished to imitate Peter I. for which he wanted capacity."

Frederic, who saw with its success, the bold attempt of the empress, repeatedly warned his minister Goltz, that, since Peter was bent on his own destruction, it would be well to prepare for the event. In pursuance of this counsel, Goltz, the companion and flatterer of the czar, was, on the reverse of his fortunes, the first to abandon him, and to fawn on his adversaries. Such is the virtue—the friendship of courts!

An envoy from Copenhagen was also received graciously by the empress, and assured of her pacific intentions towards Denmark. With Keith, the English embassador, she treated as with a friendly power, and renewed with England the treaty of commerce.

Catherine, while establishing peace with the foreign powers, was not negligent of the internal tranquillity of the empire. The court assumed a new aspect; every thing was in subordination to the secret power of Gregory Orloff, whose influence and pride daily increased. The nobles, incensed and humiliated by the insolence of the favourite, ardently desired his ruin: some of them, losing sight of prudence, ventured to speak out,

while Catherine, dissembling for a time, meditated to avenge the cause of her lover.

Accounts arrived from Moscow of a more favourable nature; brandy and money judiciously distributed, had worked a change in the minds of the malecontents; the soldiers acknowledged the rights of a sovereign, of whose bounty they received such substantial proofs. Catherine hastened her journey to the ancient capital, for the purpose of celebrating the ceremony of her coronation. Previous to her departure from Petersburg, she assembled the guards by whom she had been seated on the throne, and, having bestowed on them farther testimonies of her gratitude, left them under the command of Razumoffsky, the hetman, with whom she joined prince Volkensky. The government of the city was confided to count Bruce, on whose fidelity Catherine could rely. Alexius Orloff had a charge to watch over the whole. Gregory, his brother, and the chancellor Bestucheff, were chosen as attendants on the empress, among whom also were her principal adherents, and those nobles who could not be left without danger. The young Paul Petrovitch, and the principal ladies of the court, completed the suite.

The cavalcade entered with pomp into Moscow, where money had been previously distributed; yet no acclamations, no tokens of public approbation, welcomed its approach. In this portentous silence, Catherine read too truly the sentiments of the people. Having proceeded to the chapel of the czars, she lavished her blandishments on the archbishop and priests, and was crowned in the presence of the soldiery and people of the court. The crowd, which had shrunk back on the appearance of the empress, rushed forward to meet the grand-duke, mingling with their expressions of tenderness for the child, an apparent concern for the fate of his father.

Catherine, pained and dissatisfied by all that had past, nevertheless concealed her chagrin, and made the earliest preparations for her return to Petersburg. During her stay at Moscow, she honoured the ancient capital by issuing from it several proclamations; while, to flatter the military, which had been neglected by Peter, she published a manifesto, on the day of her coronation, in praise of the troops who had fought against Prussia. By other favours and promotions, she likewise sought to conciliate the attachment of the garrison.

The monks, who had favoured her projects, and

to whom, despoiled by Peter, she had promised a restoration of their possessions, recalled to her memory their zeal and their services. Catherine, aware that the power so successfully exerted in her favour might, in different circumstances, be opposed against her, prudently forbore, with more sagacity than gratitude, to re-establish their privileges; contenting herself with referring their plea to the examination of a synod devoted to her will. The principal members of the clergy were brought over in secret; the remainder, sacrificed to policy, vowed vengeance against those by whom they had been duped.

Priests are not offended with impunity. By their ascendancy over ordinary and ignorant minds their power is always formidable. In conformity to their threats, the Russian clergy fanned among the populace the embers of sedition, which were smothered rather than extinguished by the late events. The malecontents recalled to their remembrance prince Ivan, who, on the very day of the revolution, was concealed in Petersburg, whence he had since been mysteriously removed. It was openly declared that, to him, as to the rightful heir, the throne of his ancestors properly belonged. A manifesto, drawn up by a state-counsellor, and signed by Peter, in which the

faults of Catherine were summed up, her infidelities stated, and her son pronounced illegitimate, was found and published in the city. This paper, composed with force and eloquence, was circulated among the people, and made its way to the troops, who already deplored the consequences of their infatuation, and lamented the fate of their lawful sovereign. Every thing portended a new revolution, when an imperial proclamation suddenly came forth, by which the guards were forbidden to assemble without orders from their superiors. Some of the ringleaders were, at the same instant, seized, and condemned to the punishment of the knout; others were banished to Siberia; while terror for a time held the rest to their duty. The empress believing that, by a prompt severity, and the chastisement of the guards, she should effectually silence the priests, refused even to temporise with those who displeased her.

She even added, in some instances, contempt to severity: to Ivan Schuvaloff, whose services had merited from her a recompence, and whose pretensions had awakened the jealousy of Orloff, she sent an order to leave the court, and presented to him, as a reward of his exertions in her favour, an old negro, who played about the palace the part of a buffoon. Villebois, the general of the

artillery, who had yielded at her command his duty to the czar, was, at the instance of Orloff, who wished for his employment, and dreaded his talents, dismissed from his office, of which his enemy took possession.

The pretensions of the princess Dashkoff had become offensive to her friend: this young heroine, who, at the commencement of the revolution had, with the empress, put on the uniform of the guards, and marched at their head, demanded, as an acknowledgment of her activity and courage, the title of colonel of the regiment of Preobajensky. Catherine, smiling, ironically replied, 'that the *academy*, she should suppose, would be more suitable to her character than a military corps.' The princess, severely mortified, murmured among her friends at the ingratitude of the empress, to whose elevation she had sacrificed her family; while yielding to the impetuosity of her character, she sought for an opportunity of testifying her resentment. Odart, her Piedmontese favourite, was the first to observe the change in her sentiments, and to report his observation to Catherine. The princess, deserted by the woman whom she had raised to a throne, and betrayed by the man who owed to her his fortunes, immediately received orders to retire to

Moscow. But even this was not considered as sufficient; Odart was commissioned by his imperial mistress, to engage the embassador of France to write to Voltaire a caution against the vanity of madame Dashkoff, with an intimation that, should he transmit to posterity the recent events, he would do well to mention this young person but slightly, as having acted a subordinate and inferior part in a revolution which, it was hinted, was to be attributed wholly to the courage and sagacity of the empress. How truly contemptible does the *great* Catherine appear in this conduct! how rare is true magnanimity and greatness of soul! The embassador, M. Breteul, went somewhat beyond his commission, when, in his letter he added "*C'est pousser bien loin la jalousie et la hardiesse de l'ingratitude.*" The same commission was given to the Russian embassadors at London and Paris*.

* More than five-and-twenty years after the event, Catherine held the same language. It was her wish that the history of her life and reign should have been composed by the historian of Charles V. Various suggestions were, from time to time, given to that effect, and transmitted to Scotland. The papers and documents for the purpose were to be furnished by herself.

The archbishop of Novgorod, a principal instrument in the revolution, and who, gained over by money and promises, had assisted in diminishing the privileges of the monks, found all his hopes and expectations frustrated. Catherine, no longer needing his services, abandoned him, disgraced and mortified, to the contempt of the clergy, by whom he was hated, and to the rage of the people who detested his ambition.

The triumph of the empress had, in the mean time, been learned with joy by Poniatoffsky, who, since his departure from Petersburg, had, by the aid of some friends, kept up a regular correspondence with Catherine, who still affected constancy to the attachment with which he had inspired her. Depending upon these professions, and aspiring probably to the hand of her whose heart he fondly believed to be his own, the Pole advanced to the frontiers of his country, whence he sent to entreat permission to repair to Petersburg. The answer informed him, that his presence at court was not necessary, and that the empress had different views in his favour. Still solicitous that he should remain in ignorance of her other connections, she wrote to him in her accustomed style: in speaking of him before their

mutual confidants, she even pretended to shed tears, while she complained of the reports which attributed to her an inclination for Orloff, of whom she affected to speak with contempt.

But the lover, proud of his advantage, had not the same motives for mystery: coarse and haughty in his manners, he submitted to dissemble with an ill grace, and obliquely vaunted of his favour and power. Accustomed to reside in the barracks and cabaks*, he was not unfrequently guilty of excesses, by which he was completely thrown off his guard. Being at supper one evening with Catherine, Razumoffsky, and other courtiers, he boasted of his ascendancy over the guards and of his instrumentality in the revolution, which, he declared, had been solely effected by himself. To this he added (a temerity which liquor had inspired), that in one month, if he chose to abuse his power, he could undo his own work, and dethrone the empress. 'You might do so,' returned the hetman, smiling contemptuously, 'but, my friend, within a fortnight after, we would hang you.' The courtiers were disgusted

* Houses for drinking, frequented by the lower orders of the people.

by this insolent presumption, but the favour of Orloff was not diminished.

The attachment of Catherine for this favourite appears to have had in it more of policy than tenderness. His activity, vehemence, and boldness, gave him advantages over others, who, with more politeness, were destitute of his courage. The remaining conspirators, chiefly subaltern officers, and whom the empress believed she had already sufficiently rewarded, were by degrees removed from court, and left to their former obscurity.

The spirit of revolt had not been wholly quelled by the chastisement of its ringleaders. The removal of the archbishop Novogorod and of the princess Dashkoff, the feeble constitution of the young grand-duke, with the pity felt by all ranks for the misfortunes of prince Ivan, furnished materials for discontent, which the clergy failed not to irritate and inflame. The barracks were in a state of general fermentation: during one whole day Catherine was in imminent danger of suffering the fate of her husband, if, like his, her courage had forsaken her. Without summoning a council, she took private measures for dispersing the storm, and replied to the ministers, who, with the members of the senate, came to testify their uneasiness, with equal dignity and firmness of

spirit. 'Why,' said she, 'are you alarmed? Think ye that I fear to face danger? or rather do ye fear that I know not how to conquer it? Remember, in moments more terrible than this, you have seen me in full possession of the vigour of my mind; and that I can support, with the same serenity, the favour of fortune and its most cruel reverse. Is it from a few factious spirits, a few mutinous soldiers, that I am to dread being deprived of a crown reluctantly accepted as the means of delivering the nation from the evils which menaced it? I neither know with what pretence they colour their insolence, nor on what measures they rely for success; I know only that they give me no alarm. Providence, which called me to reign, will preserve me for the glory and happiness of the empire; and in that Almighty arm which has hitherto defended me, I trust for confounding the projects of my foes*.'

The Orloffs neglected nothing that might conciliate the guards; presents softened those whom promises failed to appease. The mutiny being suppressed, four-and-twenty officers were arrested

* It is certain that Catherine thus expressed herself, even in the presence of some of the disaffected.

and tried, and four found guilty and condemned to death. Their punishment was, by the empress, commuted into exile; previous to which, with a view of inspiring the Russians with a dread of ignominy, she caused them to be degraded, and scourged by the executioner.

While Catherine thus governed her subjects, she displayed to foreign courts the strength of her character. Combining policy with firmness, she found means to sooth the most dangerous of the clergy, and to stop the cabals of the monks. The princess Dashkoff was recalled to court, lest her enterprises at Moscow might disturb the peace of the empire. Odart, whose treacherous and continual informations had rendered him odious to the courtiers, was dismissed from the service of the empress, whose fame began to spread through Europe. The health of Paul Petrovitch, whose promising qualities drew the eyes of the nation from the prison of Ivan, was entirely re-established; and the Russians submitted to the yoke, from which they had vainly tried to escape.

Ambition had not stifled in the bosom of Catherine the love of pleasure, by which she attached to herself the courtiers: but amusement was not suffered to interfere with business; the empress applied herself alternately to either with

equal attention, and with equal ardor. She assisted at the deliberations of the council, read the dispatches from her embassadors, dictated, or with her own hand minuted, the answers to be sent, and attended to the detail of their execution. Jealous of glory, she placed before her as models the examples of those monarchs who had, by their illustrious qualities and the grandeur of their exploits, effaced the recollection of their weaknesses; and with the frailty of men, merited, as the friends and benefactors of their species, the praise and gratitude of posterity. 'We should be constant in our plans,' said she; 'it is better to do amiss, than to alter our purpose. None but fools are irresolute.'—Such were her favourite maxims.

The war carried on against Frederic, king of Prussia, continued to agitate Europe. Russia had separated from the formidable league, and Sweden was following the example. Peter had restored to Frederic the territory of East Prussia, conquered by the Russian arms; he had even ordered his troops to fight as allies under his favourite hero. It became now important to know the resolution that Catherine would think proper to adopt. Frederic had been the friend of Peter, and as such, it might be supposed, would be re-

garded at present with jealousy and distrust. The letters which had passed between these monarchs, fell, on the death of her husband, into the hands of Catherine. Frederic had been to Peter a wise and generous friend; his letters afforded proofs of his prudence, his sagacity, and his concern for the real interests of the czar: they repeatedly admonished him to the restoration of domestic concord, and the re-establishment of peace in the imperial family. Catherine, affected by the kindness and integrity of the writer, shed tears of pleasure on the perusal of these papers, and ratified the peace with Prussia and Denmark.

While the empire enjoyed peace with foreign powers, internal maladies fermented in its bosom, which neither the severity nor the clemency of the empress had yet been able wholly to eradicate. The state of the finances, and the dictates of policy, forbade her to divert the attention of the public by brilliant novelties or successful enterprises. The administration of her estates, the advancement of commerce, the augmentation of the marine, and the revenues of the nation, engrossed, by turns, her attention and care. The necessity for economy was pressing and obvious; but the temper of Catherine, and the magnificence of her

spirit, would not permit her to renounce that oriental splendor, for which, since the commencement of the reign of Elizabeth, the court of Petersburg had been distinguished and famed: a splendor which appeared the more necessary during a profound peace, and in an unsettled state of the empire, to attract and dazzle the eyes of the nation.

After the business with her ministers was transacted, the empress would converse in private with Bestucheff and Munich: with the former she studied politics and the affairs of Europe; while the latter consulted her respecting the execution of a plan, meditated during his exile in Siberia, for driving the Turks from Constantinople; a project which gratified her aspiring temper, and which, thirty years afterwards, was on the point of being effected.

But in distant views of ambition or interest, the empress neglected not her domestic regulations: she studied the duties of a sovereign, and considered herself as the mother of her people, whom she treated with confidence, and whose condition she ameliorated. In her first manifesto (July 6th, 1762) on her accession to the throne, "We wish," says she, "to prove how far we merit the love of our people, for whose happiness we a-

knowledge our throne to be established: and we solemnly promise on our imperial word, to make in the empire such arrangements, that the government may, with an intrinsic force, support itself within proper and limited bounds; each department of the state being provided with wholesome laws, sufficient to the preservation of order, at all times, and in all circumstances," &c. Again, in the ukause of the 29th of July, in the same year: "Not only all that we have or may have, but also our life itself, we have devoted to our dear country. We value nothing on our own account; we serve not ourself; but we labour with all pains, with all diligence, for the glory and happiness of our people." The empress solemnly promised to maintain justice: in pursuance of this resolution, she banished for life to Siberia, a man who had taken money for administering the oath of allegiance, and issued a severe decree against bribery and extortion. She drew on this occasion a horrible picture of the corruption of the times: "If any one is desirous of an office, he must pay for it; if any one wishes to defend himself from calumny, it must be done with money; if any one would slander another, he corroborates his malice by bribes. In this manner are the sacred courts of justice converted into

a market. The arts of chicane are practised to the oppression of the people; under the forms of law, wrongly interpreted, ruin is brought upon the persons and families, even of those who are rather deserving of sovereign complacency and favour." Wretched is the nation to whom this portrait applies!

By an ukause, dated Moscow, October 13th, the abolition of the secret-inquisition chancery was confirmed: an honourable testimony of the advance of liberal knowledge. Catherine trusted to secure the affection of her people by other means than the encouragement of spies and defamers: superior to degrading fears, she confided her security to the magnanimity of her conduct, and despised a political inquisition. This court, instituted by Peter I., teemed with the most dreadful mischiefs: Catherine decreed, that it "should be now for ever abolished; its acts brought into the senate, sealed up in the archives, and consigned to eternal oblivion." High treason, and attempts against religion or the state, had been the crimes subject to the jurisdiction of this tribunal, but, gradually increasing in its power, it had encroached on the province of the ordinary courts. Real state-crimes were, on its abolition, so distinctly defined, that malicious or sinister interpreta-

tions were no longer practicable, while religious penalties were, with a wise policy, completely suppressed. Among the abuses of the horrible institution annihilated by the empress, imprisonment, and frequently execution, was the commencement of the process. Regular modes of evidence were held inadequate to the nature of this mysterious tribunal: when the accuser failed in every kind of proof, the punishment of the knout was three several times inflicted upon him, after which his declaration was admitted as legal: the accused, unless he rather chose to be thought guilty, had liberty to deliver his objections on the same terms. In this proceeding, which, when the judge wavered between the parties, was often repeated, neither age, sex, nor station, were regarded: if the accuser brought forward some plausible pretence on which to ground his allegation, the accused had a yet more dreadful coercion to undergo.

Catherine ordained that torture should no more be used in the investigation of truth; and, with Frederic of Prussia, afforded on this occasion an example to Europe. Her criminal laws breathe throughout a spirit mild and gentle: if she made no vows (like Elizabeth her predecessor) to avoid

the infliction of death, capital punishments were, during her long reign, very rare.

The empress, by a manifesto, August, 1763, declared, that colonists should find welcome and support in Russia; a tutelary chancery, for the protection of foreigners, was accordingly instituted. Her next measure was to point out to them such districts, hitherto unoccupied, as were proper for agriculture, with notices and distinctions respecting forest, arable, and meadow-land, &c.; what allotments bordered upon rivers, and what the fisheries might yield. But not merely for the purpose of agriculture were strangers encouraged, but also in the towns, as merchants, manufacturers, and artificers. The proclamation set forth, "That any one destitute of money for the expences of his journey, should be forwarded at the charge of the crown, should receive a competent assistance on his arrival, and even, if necessary, receive an advance of capital, free of interest for ten years," &c. All religious opinions, as a matter between the individual and his God, were tolerated. An annual revenue of two hundred thousand rubles was at once granted to the tutelary chancery. Also, for colonists in the government of Astrakhan, a clergyman of every

sect, a parish clerk, a physician, a surgeon, and apothecary, &c. to be paid by the crown.

On the proclamation of these advantages in Germany, thousands flocked to take possession of the promised land: families, individuals, beggars, projectors, literati, artificers, mechanics, either sex, and every age, crowded to the ports to be wafted to the shores of the Volga and Sumara, which abounded with beautiful and fertile tracts of country. Prohibitions were at first issued by the petty princes of Germany, forbidding these emigrations; but the discontents of the new settlers gave to them, as might have been expected, a more important check. The total change of climate, of habits, of language, and of customs, cannot fail on these occasions to afford sufficient subjects of discontent to the thoughtless and sanguine: to these may be added the idle and the romantic, who, seeking to escape from labour or from lassitude, suffer in their disappointment unavoidable disgust. The empress was in these measures, however well intended, probably too precipitate: the population of a nation, under a wise and equitable government, will necessarily and gradually increase: ingenious foreigners will likewise, without compulsion or extraordinary efforts, resort to those countries where talents find

their recompence, and where the laws afford to them security and protection. But of this better mode of multiplying her subjects, Catherine was neither ignorant nor negligent.

With similar views, the empress, at the proposal of general Betskoy, laid the foundations, both in Petersburg and at Moscow, of the foundling and lying-in hospitals. She also founded at Petersburg the medicinal college of the empire, which was placed immediately under her inspection.

Amidst these regulations, she neglected not the study of a more important science, that of *human nature*, and of her own mind, of which she truly appreciated the powers and resources. In a confidential conversation with the minister of France, she required of him his opinion respecting the duration of a peace, recently concluded between Austria and Prussia. The minister replied, 'that the exhaustion of the people, and the wisdom of the sovereigns, seemed to promise a long tranquillity;' but added, with a compliment to her sagacity, 'that she, who by her forces could direct them at will, was better enabled to appreciate the political systems of the courts of Europe.' 'You think then,' said Catherine, assuming an air of humility, 'that Europe at present has its attention

fixed on me, and that I am not without weight in the foreign courts.' The embassador, of course, replied in the affirmative. The empress having listened to him with apparent pleasure, exclaimed with dignity, 'I do indeed believe that Russia merits attention. I have the finest army in the world. I am short of money, it is true, but shall be abundantly provided within a few years. If I gave the reins to my inclination, my taste is for war rather than for peace; but reason, justice, and humanity, restrain me. Yet I will not, like the empress Elizabeth, allow myself to be pressed to make war. Whenever it shall prove for my advantage, I will assuredly enter upon it; but never through complaisance to others.' To this she added, 'that, till after five years, the world could not properly judge of her character; that period it would at least require to reduce the empire to order, and to reap the fruit of her cares. In the mean time, she should act towards all the princes in Europe like a finished coquette.' These expressions, which the minister imputed to vanity, were literally true. M. de Breteuil ventured not to reply but by a flattering compliment.

The first trial made by Catherine of her interest, was in favour of Biren, to whom, though the despoiler of his son, she forced the king of

Poland to give the investiture of Courland. Satisfied with this docility, she employed her mediation, though with unequal success, between Austria and Prussia, to induce them to withdraw their troops from the dominions of the Polish monarch.

Frederic courted the friendship of Catherine, aware of its advantages, by the most flattering attentions. He presented to her the order of the black eagle, which she accepted graciously, and condescended to wear: this had been among the crimes imputed to her husband; but what might be thought a weakness in him, was, in his successor, a proof of her power.

Less apprehensive of foreign powers than of internal adversaries, the czarina neglected nothing that might attach to her her subjects: generous both from temper and policy, she was even prodigal in bounty, with a view of augmenting the number of her dependents; but her fears at times misguided her choice. To the friends of the deceased czar she shewed lenity, granting liberty to Gudovitch, to Volkoff, and to Milganoff; on the two latter she bestowed offices and favour. Gudovitch, with a noble pride, refused to avail himself of her liberality, and would accept nothing from her hand.

Reflections on the fate of Peter, with the repetition of petty conspiracies, kept the mind of Catherine in perpetual disquietude, which, from the necessity of dissembling, she perhaps felt but the more deeply. The arrogance of Gregory Orloff, with the jealousy of the court, afforded to her another source of anxiety: the petulance of the favourite, by the disgust which it inspired, kept from her presence men the most distinguished for their birth and station: she found herself surrounded only by soldiers, who, with rough and uncouth manners, abused their supposed rights to her favour and gratitude. It was not their past services for which she was paying them, but for those they might still afford her; her bounties served but to sharpen their rapacity and increase their insolence. Ashamed of the deference which her situation extorted from her, she would sometimes ascribe to these men qualities which belonged not to them. 'The life I lead,' she would say, 'surrounded by people of no education, is far from agreeable; yet to these men I owe what I am. They have courage and probity, and will not, I am sure, betray me.' Such are the sacrifices which ambition exacts; freedom, quiet, independence, and the social affections, are the oblations offered at its shrine.

Panin was, among this savage herd, the only man distinguished by courtesy of manners, and cultivation of mind; yet his was but a secondary influence. Intent on establishing his aristocratical system, he seized every occasion for displaying its advantages: observing the mind of Catherine disquieted by alarms, he conceived the moment favourable for pressing his plan. After aggravating the evils inseparable from an usurpation, and the dangers which menaced her on every side, he intimated an expedient for the removal of these vexations, to which a false delicacy only could induce her to object.

He then proceeded to paint in glowing colours his favourite principles, while he exhorted her to limit those powers which, tempting the ambition of the bold pretender, so often proved fatal to their possessor. 'Make a sacrifice,' said he, 'of an absolute control. Create a fixed and permanent council which shall secure to you the throne. Renounce for yourself and your successors the power of depriving at pleasure the members of that august body. Declare that to their peers alone their conduct and their privileges shall be submitted. From the moment these measures shall be adopted, the means by which you obtained the crown will be remembered no more,

while it is seen that by justice you are determined to preserve it.'

The empress, dazzled by the plausibility and novelty of a project which appeared to promise conciliation and renown, lost sight at the moment of the mischiefs with which it teemed. The miseries of the people had little prospect of alleviation, in exchanging one sovereign, active and enlightened, for twenty or thirty tyrants, chosen from a privileged order, amenable to no authority, and unlimited in their jurisdiction. The despotism of a *body* is more terrible, because more permanent, than that of an individual.

Catherine having charged Panin to commit his thoughts to paper, he lost no time in obeying her; while, in order the more effectually to secure his interest, he placed at the head of those of whom the senate was to be composed the name of the favourite. Orloff, flattered by this distinction, demanded time for consideration, and, in the interval, imparted the plan to Bestucheff. Sensible of the value of a power which he had long directed, Bestucheff took the alarm, and, with energy, represented to the empress the perils which threatened the measure proposed by Panin: he conjured her not to expose herself to a long repentance by dividing an authority so

dearly earned; which, if lost for an instant, would never be regained. Catherine perceived the prudence of this counsel, which she promised to observe. On his next appearance before her, Panin found her mind determined; she did justice to his zeal, praised his sagacity, but declined to avail herself of it. The minister, cruelly mortified by this overthrow of his hopes, gave vent, among his friends, to his disgust. 'If,' said he, rashly, 'the empress is determined to rule alone, you will see we shall make of it a sad reign.'

Panin was not long in discovering to whom he owed his defeat, nor in finding an opportunity to retaliate upon his adversary. Bestucheff, observing the influence of Orloff, which Catherine no longer attempted to conceal, artfully insinuated to the favourite, with a view of rendering himself yet more necessary, the pleasure he should feel in beholding him ascend the throne. 'It is to no purpose,' said he to him, 'that the empress gives you her heart, while she withholds from you her hand.' He went on to represent to him his claims to her affection, and his rights to her gratitude, with the propriety and practicability of the measure he proposed, concluding by an offer of his services in this delicate negociation, on condition

of being left to pursue his own measures, while the favourite should affect ignorance of his proceedings. Orloff listened to the aged chancellor with profound attention, adopted with facility his ambitious projects, embraced him cordially, and promised an implicit compliance with his desires.

On the same day, Bestucheff, discoursing with the empress, artfully sounded her upon the subject. After some hesitation, Catherine replied, that, notwithstanding her inclinations might favour his proposal, she could not precipitately resolve on a step so hazardous and important, and which, however attempted, could scarcely fail of giving umbrage to the empire. Respecting the means of effecting his plan, Bestucheff engaged to be himself responsible. With this view, he composed a petition, in the name of the nation, in which, after dwelling with pompous eulogium on the qualities and virtues of the empress, with the happiness and glory derived from them to her people, he touched on the infirm constitution of the apparent heir, and the consequent disquietude of the empire, conjuring Catherine to give to her subjects an additional testimony of her affection, by taking a consort, and sacrificing to their welfare her own liberty.

To conceal his real intentions from those design-

ed to promote them, he began by proposing prince Ivan, but too well aware of his rejection. Catherine, affecting to approve of the plan, yet fearful of precipitate measures, caused Ivan to be removed from Schluselburg, and lodged in a monastery not far from Archangel, where he was at first treated with the honours due to his birth; but, as if to increase his sense of the misery of his destiny, he was soon carried back in secret to his dungeon.

What had been foreseen by the chancellor failed not to happen: the petition on being presented to the clergy, was eagerly signed by twelve bishops, previously gained over, who at the same time objected to Ivan: the prince, it was alleged, presuming on his birth, might pretend to stand on his own rights, and, affecting independence of his benefactress, punish her for her bounty. Her majesty was therefore requested to select from among her subjects him whom she should conceive worthy of participating in her throne. Many of the general officers subscribed to the sentiments of the bishops; and, but for the dexterity of Panin, the courage of Razumoffsky, and the chancellor Vorontzoff, Orloff had been emperor of Russia. These courtiers combined to dissuade Catherine from the projected union, as not less

dangerous than humiliating. The hetman used on this occasion the frankness and earnestness which his station, his fortune, and his services authorised. Vorontzoff, at the feet of the empress, implored her not to form a connection teeming with the most perilous consequences. Catherine, pretending surprise, after thanking her counsellors for their friendship and courage, assured them, that the measure they deprecated had never entered her mind; that it was without her knowledge an intrigue so odious had been carried on, of which Bestucheff was the sole conductor, and who should assuredly feel her resentment. Nevertheless, she reproved not with too great severity a man who had sought but to flatter her inclinations, and whose humours she conceived it necessary to indulge.

(Concluded in the next volume.)

END OF VOLUME THE SECOND.

T. Davison, White-Friars.

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